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Nick Carter Stories

BLOOD WILL TELL

OR Nick Carter's Play in Politics

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BLOOD WILL TELL;

Or, NICK CARTER'S PLAY IN POLITICS.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE WOMAN FOUND DEAD.

The telephone communication was from Arthur Gordon, the prominent New York banker and broker, then a candidate for election to Congress on the Fusion reform ticket—a communication so sensational in character and so imbued with alarm and anxiety on the part of the speaker, that it evoked only the following terse, decided response from Nick Carter, to whom the frantic appeal had been made:

"I will go right up there, Mr. Gordon. I will be there in ten minutes."

"What's the trouble?"

The inquiry came from Chick Carter, the celebrated detective's chief assistant, when Nick arose from his swivel chair and hurriedly closed his roll-top desk.

"A murder has been committed, or said to have been," he replied.

"A murder—where?"

"Columbus Avenue," Nick said tersely. "Arthur Gordon is under arrest for the crime. The woman's body was found by—but we'll get the details later. You had better go with me. Luckily Danny is at the door with the touring car. We will lose no time."

Both detectives were leaving Nick's Madison Avenue residence when the last was said, hurriedly putting on their overcoats while entering his powerful motor car. In another moment both were seated in the tonneau and speeding north through the crisp air of the October morning. It then was nine o'clock.

Nick had hurriedly given Danny, his chauffeur, the Columbus Avenue address of the house in which the murder was said to have been committed, and he remarked, a bit grimly to Chick, while they settled back on the cushioned seat:

"By Jove, it's strange how Gordon repeatedly gets into trouble."

"I should say so."

"He certainly is up against it good and hard. It's less than a year since we pulled him out of that scrape in which he was suspected of having killed his stenographer—that double-dyed rascal, Mortimer Deland, who fooled him so completely in female attire."

"Yes, I remember," Chick nodded. "But what is he now up against? What did he tell you?"

"I did not wait to learn many of the details," Nick replied. "He has just been arrested by a plain-clothes man and a policeman. The latter was sent to his house by Detective Phelan, who evidently had learned enough to warrant his arrest."

"Great guns! is it possible?"

"Gordon yielded submissively, of course, and was allowed to telephone to me."

"Was he at his home in the Bronx?"

"No. He has been living with his parents in Riverside Drive during his present political campaign. His wife and her uncle, Rudolph Strickland, are with them. It is more convenient for Gordon to be in town while making his political fight, than at his Bronx residence."

"By Jove, this comes at a bad time for him, Nick, if there really is any serious evidence against him," Chick said gravely.

"A bad time, indeed."

"We are almost on the eve of election. Gordon has put up a splendid fight against Madison, his Congressional opponent on the Democratic ticket. His election, though the possibility was ridiculed at first, now is conceded in many quarters, and it looks to me like a cinch—unless this affair turns the tide of public opinion," Chick added, more seriously.

"That suggests something," Nick replied.

"You mean?"

"That this affair may be a frame-up, a dastardly scheme designed to have just the effect you mentioned. In other words, Chick, to throw Gordon down at the last moment and so insure Jack Madison's election."

"But Madison would not do such a beastly trick as that, nor even connive at it."

"Don't be so sure of it," Nick said dryly. "Men with political ambitions, some men, at least, are capable of infernally wicked work. Madison is very anxious to carry this election, and so is the party machine. There is much depending on it."

"That's very true," Chick allowed. "But I cannot believe Madison capable of such knavery, to say nothing of murder. Who is the victim?"

Matilda Lancey."

"The deuce you say! Her reputation is infernally bad in circles where she is well known."

Both detectives had seen her occasionally and were aware of her shady reputation. She was a frequenter of the theaters, the best hotels and the fast restaurants, with a capacity for wine that made her, in one respect at least, a desirable patron, though in public she never went beyond certain discreet points.

Tilly Lancey, in fact, as she was familiarly known, enjoyed friendly relations with a small legion of fast society chaps and men about town, and was equally distinguished for her striking beauty, her fine figure, her costly jewels, and beautiful gowns. That she had met her death at the hands of a man of Arthur Gordon's type seemed utterly incredible.

"Tilly Lancey, eh?" Chick muttered audibly. "So she has come to the end of her career. It has been hinted by some of the mud-slinging stump speakers, Nick, that Madison has been quite as friendly with Miss Lancey as the law allows, in view of the fact that he has a wife and family."

"Still another reason, perhaps, why my suggestion has feet to stand on," Nick replied. "There is nothing in speculating upon it, however, before we have learned just what has been done and what evidence has been found. Let her go lively, Danny."

There was little occasion for the last. Danny then was running nearly at top speed up Fifth Avenue, guiding the flying car with the eye and hands of an expert.

Policemen on the crossings stared amazedly till they caught a glimpse at the face of the famous detective, and, when instantly recognized, they made no attempt to stop him. They knew that only an emergency case would take him at that high speed through the most fashionable New York thoroughfare.

Less than ten minutes had passed when Danny swerved to the curbing near the home of Miss Matilda Lancey. A taxicab was standing directly in front of the house.

It was a brownstone dwelling occupying a corner lot, one of a block of five, the house having three flats accessible through a single front door and entrance hall.

A policeman was standing on the steps. He was talking with a slender man in a plaid business suit, a man with an intellectual, or professional type of countenance, with wavy hair, a pointed beard, and gold-bowed spectacles. He had a wad of "copy paper" and pencil in his hand, and he turned quickly when Nick and Chick ascended the steps, asking politely:

"Do you object to my going in with you, Mr. Carter? I am a city news man. I will be very discreet as to the story I turn in, or will be governed entirely by your wishes. I happened to be passing and saw Officer Gilroy on the steps. He told me a murder has been committed."

"How did you happen to recognize me?" Nick inquired, pausing briefly and eying the man a bit sharply.

"I did not recognize you," smiled the other. "Gilroy mentioned your name when your car stopped at the curbing."

"Well, I don't know myself just what has been done here," said Nick. "I prefer not to grant your request immediately. You may wait here until I have looked things over, if you like, and if I then have anything to give you for publication, I will inform you."

"Very well, sir. Thank you for that."

"Which flat, Gilroy?"

"The first one, Mr. Carter," said the policeman. "Detective Phelan is in there. Wait in the vestibule, Mr. Hawley, if you like," he added to the reporter. "Mr. Carter will not forget you."

Nick heard these added remarks, including the reporter's name, while he entered the house with Chick. He noticed that there were several drops of dry blood on the polished, uncarpeted floor near the door of the first flat.

A polished stairway led up to the second floor. There were three women in mourning gowns seated on the upper stairs; with pale and awed gaze they turned upon the two detectives.

Nick found the door of the first flat ajar, and he entered without knocking. A large dark man about fifty years old was seated in one of the armchairs in the handsomely furnished front parlor, but he at once arose when the two detectives entered.

"I have been waiting for you, Nick," said he, after a word in hearty greeting. "Gordon telephoned to me after his arrest, stating that you were coming here at his request, and asking me not to disturb things before you arrived. I have done very little in that line, so I decided to wait for you. That's equivalent to admitting, you see, that I realize your head to be longer than mine."

"Thanks, Phelan," said Nick, smiling faintly.

"I'm thinking, however, that this job won't require a very long head," Phelan quickly added. "The truth sticks out all over it."

"Involving Arthur Gordon?"

"I feel so sure of it that I sent a policeman, Jim Kennedy, to arrest him."

"As convincing as that, is it?"

"That's what, Nick, and there's no telling what a man might do who has done a job of this kind. I thought I'd better get him without delay."

Nick glanced around the room, noting a few drops of blood on the thick Wilton carpet, a scattered trail leading through a broad, curtained doorway into an adjoining room. One curtain of the portière was partly torn from its pins and was hanging awry from its walnut rod.

"Step in there and have a look," said Phelan. "Nothing can be done for the woman, so I've not called a physician. She was dead and gone long ago."

Nick drew aside the portière and entered the adjoining room. It evidently had been used for a living room, or a

library. In the middle of it stood a table covered with newspapers, books, and magazines.

A desk between two windows overlooking the side street, the roller shades of which still were drawn down, had been broken open and some of its contents were scattered over the floor.

Against the wall of an adjoining bedroom, accessible from a passageway leading to a dining room and kitchen, stood a sofa, on which were several handsome silk pillows. Two of them were bespattered with blood.

On the floor near one end of the sofa lay the lifeless form of the woman. She was clad in a handsome evening dress. Her bare neck and shoulders were covered with blood. Her luxuriant auburn hair was in disorder, matted with blood that had flowed from several gashes in the scalp. The skull had been beaten in with a heavy bludgeon of some kind.

She was lying on her left side, with her head nearly touching the baseboard of the wall, from which her right hand appeared to have fallen after a desperate effort to reach it, or to continue doing so.

In confirmation of this there was a coarse, angular, irregular scrawl on the wall paper, several words evidently written with a tremulous hand by the woman, and inscribed with the tip of her forefinger dipped in her own life's blood—a scrawl ending abruptly with a direct downward stroke toward where her right hand was then lying. It was as if she had expired, or lost consciousness, at least, while making a desperate effort to write more, enough to tell in full the tragic story.

The several slanting, irregular words were legible, however, and there was no mistaking their fateful significance.

They read:

"Arthur Gordon did this to get the——"

That was all save the last downward stroke left by the falling hand.

Was it enough?

Was it all that would be required to convict, to send her assassin over the same dark river?

These were the first questions that arose in the mind of Nick Carter.

CHAPTER II.

THE HEADQUARTERS MAN.

Nick Carter took in with a few swift glances those important features of the scene already mentioned. Instead of immediately beginning a more careful inspection, however, he turned to the headquarters man and said:

"Am I to understand, Phelan, that things are about as you found them?"

"Yes. Nothing has been disturbed, Nick, of any importance."

"Was the woman lying in that position?"

"Yes. I have not touched the body. I saw that writing on the wall, and——"

"One moment," Nick interposed. "Who discovered the crime?"

"A girl who lives in the second flat. She came down about eight o'clock to go out to work, and she saw spots of blood on the hall floor near the door of this flat."

"I noticed them when I entered."

"She tried the door, and found it locked. It has an automatic lock. She then rang repeatedly, being acquainted with Miss Lancey, but she could get no response."

"Does this woman live alone here?"

"Yes, so I am told, except when entertaining her friends."

"I see."

"The girl then called her mother, and they hunted for Gilroy, who is on this beat. He entered through the kitchen window, forcing it open, and he then saw what had occurred. I happened to be in the precinct station when he telephoned," added Phelan, pointing to a telephone on a stand in one corner. "I came here with Kennedy, taking temporary charge of the case, and I soon found evidence enough to warrant sending him to arrest Mr. Gordon."

"You mean that writing on the wall?"

"Yes, partly."

"What else?"

"I found this letter in the wastebasket," said Phelan, taking it from his pocket. "It must have been written by Gordon, for it is on a letter sheet bearing his business heading, as does the envelope in which it came."

"Let me see them."

"It was mailed at two o'clock yesterday. It contains only a single line addressed to Miss Lancey, stating that Gordon would call to see her here at eleven o'clock. That must have been eleven o'clock last evening."

Nick glanced at the brief pen-written letter. He was familiar with Gordon's writing, and he immediately recognized it. The letter seemed to corroborate all of Phelan's statements.

"Did you think that was evidence enough to warrant arresting Gordon?" Nick again inquired.

"I thought it enough for a starter, Nick, at least," Phelan bluntly asserted. "I reckon I have not shot very wide of the mark."

"Why so?"

"Because Kennedy has phoned me of other facts."

"Namely?"

"He met Dennis Regan, a detective from the precinct station, just before he arrived at the Gordon residence," Phelan proceeded to disclose. "He told Regan what had occurred and whom he was after. Regan decided he would not butt in, knowing I was on the case, but he waited in the grounds south of the house while Kennedy went in to see Gordon."

"Well?"

"While he was out there, pacing up and down the gravel walk, he noticed that one of the small branches of a clump of shrubbery was partly broken off and hanging down, as if something had recently been thrown in among the shrubs, disturbing the dry leaves that had fallen from them."

"He went to examine them, I infer."

"That's what. He found under the dry leaves a double-jointed jimmy. It was parted at the socket each section being about eight inches long, and both were badly stained with blood."

"Quite a remarkable discovery," Nick observed, with brows knitting slightly. "Anything more?"

"Well, as far as that goes, this desk evidently was forced open with just such a jimmy," Phelan continued, turning to the desk. "Here are marks on the wood, showing plainly where the curving, wedge-shaped point

was forced under the top to pry it up and break the lock."

"I see," Nick nodded. "That's very evident, Phelan, indeed."

"The jimmy found by Regan has just that kind of a point."

"Still more evidence, eh?"

"I think so, Nick. It's a safe bet, too, that this woman's head was broken with the same jimmy. The fractures and gashes show plainly that a bludgeon of that kind was used."

"I agree with you," said Nick, crouching to inspect the several terrible wounds. "Both the fractures and gashes could have been caused only with a bludgeon having one or more edges. The jimmy is probably octagonal in shape."

"Very likely. I did not inquire about that."

"Well, what followed?"

"Regan then decided to dip into the case," Phelan continued. "He went into the house and found that Kennedy had discovered other evidence."

"What kind of evidence?"

"To begin with, Nick, Gordon refused to say where he was at eleven o'clock last night. Kennedy then told him about the murder and placed him under arrest. To make a long story short, for I have not all of the details, Gordon's evening suit, which he admits having worn last night, was found spattered with blood."

"H'm, is that so?"

"There are stains of blood in one pocket of his overcoat, also, as if the jimmy was disjointed and thrust into it after the murder. You can see for yourself that the weapon used by the assassin is missing."

"Yes, so I have noticed."

"In the other pocket of Gordon's overcoat was a disguise, a false beard and mustache. They——"

"One moment," Nick interrupted. "Gordon saw all of this evidence, I suppose."

"Yes, certainly."

"What did he say about it?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"He refused positively to make any statements whatever," Phelan explained. "He said he would not do so until after he had conferred with you. Regan then allowed him to telephone to you, and, while waiting for Gordon to get ready to accompany him, he phoned these facts to me."

"Where is Gordon now?"

"On his way to police headquarters, if not already there," said Phelan. "Both Regan and Kennedy went with him."

"Taking the evidence mentioned."

"Yes, certainly."

"And that's all you know about the case?"

"Isn't that enough?" Phelan asked bluntly. "What more would you have? It tells the story plainly enough."

"What story?" inquired Nick tentatively. "What is your theory?"

"It can be told with a breath," Phelan declared. "Gordon came here to get something from this woman. His letter shows that he had an appointment with her at eleven last night. She refused to give him what he wanted, evidently something which he knew was in this desk. He came prepared to get it at any cost."

"I follow you," Nick nodded.

"When he found that she would not give it up, he killed her with the jimmy and then broke open the desk with it. Here are stains of blood on the desk, showing that it was forced after the murder was committed."

"That appears probable," Nick allowed.

"Gordon probably found what he wanted, and then fled," Phelan went on. "The woman afterward revived sufficiently to realize the situation, also that she was near her end. She must have been too weak to rise, or to make herself heard. But she dragged herself near enough to the wall to write these few words on it with the tip of her finger, dipped in the pool of blood. The smooches of blood on the carpet show plainly that she dragged herself over the floor. She evidently died, or fainted, before she could complete what she would have written. That's my theory, Carter."

"Very good," said Nick, a bit dryly. "All that seems very logical, Phelan, and you're some theorist. I will look around a bit, however, and see what more I can find."

"Go ahead," Phelan nodded. "The day is young."

It then was only half past nine.

Instead of immediately doing so, however, Nick abruptly changed his mind. He turned to Chick and said:

"I first must see Gordon and see what he has to say. His statements may be of aid in making an investigation. I can run down to headquarters with my car and be back here in half an hour."

"Easily."

"Let nothing be disturbed until I return. Admit no one, Phelan, nor give out anything for publication. Gordon is in a position to be ruined politically by this affair. I know he is the last man in the world, however, to have committed such a crime as this."

"I agree with you, Nick, to that extent."

"And that leads me to think it may be a frame-up, that some one is out to turn him down. I want his side of the story. I will return within an hour."

"We'll wait," nodded Phelan.

"In the meantime, Chick, have a look at the back door and windows, also those in the basement, as well as the basement stairs," Nick then directed. "Seek evidence, aside from that left by Gilroy, denoting that others were here last night and that the flat was stealthily entered."

"I understand," said Chick, removing his overcoat. "You go ahead and see Gordon. I'll make sure that nothing is tampered with before you return."

Nick hastened out by the way he had entered.

The reporter Hawley, still was waiting in the vestibule.

"Well, Mr. Carter, what may I——" he began eagerly.

"Nothing doing," Nick interrupted, pausing only for a moment. "The less you publish at present, the better I shall like it."

"You mean——"

"That's all I mean, and all I can remain to say. Bear it in mind, Mr. Hawley, and be governed accordingly."

Nick did not wait for an answer, nor to note the effect of his somewhat curt remarks. He at once ran down the steps and entered his touring car.

"To police headquarters, Danny, at top speed," he directed. "We have a rapid-fire case on our hands."

Hawley came out on the steps and gazed after the speeding car. He now was frowning darkly. There was an

anxious gleam and glitter deep down in the narrowed eyes back of his gold-bowed spectacles. His pointed beard twitched and quivered perceptibly while he bit his lower lip.

After a moment, nevertheless, he turned calmly to the policeman and asked, with curious coolness:

"Where has he gone?"

"Give it up," said Gilroy tersely. "He never tells where he's going, nor what he has up his sleeve. Nick Carter isn't that kind."

"He might have said, at least, whether I could enter the flat and——"

"Rats!" Gilroy growled. "Did you want it written down with a slate and pencil? He as much as said you couldn't enter. There's nothing for you in waiting."

Hawley waited, nevertheless.

CHAPTER III.

NICK TAKES A CHANCE.

Nick Carter found Gordon seated in a detention room at police headquarters, accompanied by Regan, Kennedy, and the police commissioner.

The two officers had arrived with their prisoner several minutes before, bringing also the evidence mentioned by Phelan. Despite the persuasive arguments of the commissioner however, for the two men were personal friends, Gordon had positively refused to make any statements about the case, or to discuss the threatening situation in which he was involved.

He sprang up eagerly, nevertheless, when Nick entered, and a tinge of color appeared in his pale cheeks. He extended his hand, saying fervently:

"Thank Heaven, Carter, that you have arrived. I was just about to request that I might telephone to you again. I seem to be in a deucedly bad mess. I can depend only upon you to pull me out of it."

"I will try to do so, Gordon, of course," Nick replied, after a word of greeting for the others. "Have you told——"

"I have told nothing," Gordon interrupted. "Nor will I, Nick, except in a private interview with you. I then will state all that I know about this infernal business."

"Well, that can be arranged, I think," Nick replied, turning to the commissioner. "Have you any objection?"

"None whatever, Nick," was the reply. "I know of no man I would rather have on the case. Go as far as you like."

The commissioner at once withdrew with Regan and Kennedy, and Nick took the chair the former vacated.

"Now, Gordon, hand me straight goods and be quick about it," he said forcibly. "I have been to Tilly Lancey's flat and know what has been found there, also what Regan and Kennedy have discovered that appears to incriminate you. It goes without saying, however, that I don't take much stock in it. I must have the whole truth from you, nevertheless, if I am to pull you out of the fire."

"Have you seen——"

"Don't delay to question me," Nick interrupted insistently. "I shall see all there is to be seen. Merely answer my questions as briefly as possible. Did you call on Tilly Lancey last evening?"

"Yes, I did," Gordon admitted.

"Did you mail her a letter stating that you would visit her at eleven o'clock?"

"Yes."

"For what? What relations have you had with a woman of her stamp?"

"That can be quickly told," said Gordon. "I was stopped on Fifth Avenue three days ago by a fashionably dressed woman, closely veiled. She asked me to give her a few minutes' conversation, stating that she had important information for me, something that would have a favorable bearing upon my election to congress."

"You consented?"

"Yes."

"What followed?"

"She then said that she had in her possession a package of letters written to her by my political opponent, John Madison, the nature of which, if made public, would ruin him politically and insure his defeat."

"H'm, I see."

"She said that she would allow me to read them, that I might judge for myself of the effect their publication would have, and to which she would consent on conditions that she would state after I had read the letters."

"What reply did you make?" Nick questioned.

"Naturally, being very anxious to carry this election, I questioned her further," said Gordon. "She would reveal nothing more definite, however, unless I would call on her and examine the letters."

"Do you mean, Gordon, that she did not then reveal her identity?" Nick inquired.

"Oh, no, not that," Gordon said quickly. "I told her that I would not consider such a proposition from any unknown woman. She then drew her veil aside and I recognized her."

"Matilda Lancey?"

"Yes."

"You say you recognized her," said Nick. "How long have you known her?"

"I never spoke to her before in my life," Gordon earnestly assured him. "I long have known her by name and reputation, however, and I at once decided that I would not consider her proposal."

"Quite right, I'm sure."

"I told her so, Nick, but she insisted upon my taking her address and her telephone number, lest I should change my mind," Gordon went on. "She said that I could communicate with her, in that case, and that was all during that meeting."

"Well, what more?"

"I did not then intend to give the matter another thought," said Gordon. "I could not keep it out of my mind, however, for I am having a hard political fight and seeking every possible lever with which to swing the election my way."

"In short, Gordon, you finally decided to call on Tilly Lancey and read the Madison letters," said Nick, interrupting.

"That's the main point. I did, Nick, and I tried to get her by telephone yesterday morning," bowed Gordon. "I was unable to do so, however, and I then wrote a line to her and dropped it in the mail when I went out to lunch."

"Did you afterward hear from her or try to telephone to her?"

"No. I took it for granted that she would receive my

note and that I would find her at home at the time mentioned."

"Why did you set so late an hour?"

"Because I had a political appointment which I knew would detain me until nearly eleven o'clock."

"Enough of that, then," said Nick. "It covers that part of the ground. At what time did you arrive at her flat?"

"It was after eleven, nearly half past.'

"You found her at home?"

"Yes."

"Alone?"

"Yes, so far as I knew."

"What followed?"

"I had removed my—but I am getting ahead of my story," Gordon broke off. "Knowing the reputation of the woman, Nick, and that my face has become a very familiar one because of the political placards about town, and apprehending that I might be recognized, if seen going there, and incur adverse and unjust criticism, I resolved to visit her in disguise."

"I see," said Nick, without further comments.

"As I was saying," Gordon continued, "I removed my disguise in the vestibule, and Miss Lancey admitted me a moment later. She invited me into the room back of the front parlor."

"I know," Nick nodded. "What then occurred?"

"She then came to the point and said plainly that she wanted to sell me the letters Madison had written to her. She stated that they were of so compromising a character that, if published, his defeat in the coming election would be inevitable."

"That's about what I suspected," Nick remarked.

"She offered to give them to me and permit me to have them published, either personally or indirectly, for ten thousand dollars. She did most of the talking, Nick, and that's about all that was said."

"You mean——"

"I mean, of course, that I would not resort to such despicable means even to insure my election," Gordon interrupted more forcibly. "I told her so, also what I thought of her and her proposition, and I then left the house."

"Did she accompany you to the door?"

"No. I departed in haste and disgust, both for her and myself, for having gone there."

"What was she doing when you left?"

"She was seated on a sofa in the rear parlor. I paused in the vestibule only to replace my disguise, and I then hastened home. That was the last I saw of her, or want to see."

"I understand."

"You can imagine my amazement and consternation, therefore, when I was arrested this morning for having murdered her, to say nothing of being confronted with such evidence as has been discovered," Gordon added. "I tell you, Nick, nevertheless, that I——"

"Never mind telling me, Gordon, for time is of value," Nick again interposed. "Merely answer my questions. Did you see the package of letters she claimed to have had?"

"I did not, Nick. She said they were in her desk."

"Was the desk closed?"

"Yes, and locked. It is a roll top, which locks automatically when the cover is rolled completely down. I noticed that it was tightly closed."

"It was locked, Gordon, all right," said Nick. "Did you remove your overcoat while talking with Miss Lancey?"

"Yes."

"Did you put it on before leaving the flat?"

"No. I put it on after reaching the street. I merely took my disguise from the pocket and put that on while in the vestibule," Gordon thoughtfully explained. "I then hurried out to the street. I may have walked half a block before putting on my overcoat, for I was feeling a bit warm and resentful. It irritated me that the woman thought me capable of such beastly business."

"She sized you up from her own standpoint," Nick remarked. "Can you in any way account for spots of blood on your suit, your overcoat, and in one of the pockets of the latter?"

"No, Nick, most emphatically," Gordon declared. "I am entirely in the dark."

"Am I to understand, then, that you now have told me all that you know about the crime, or any circumstances that might have a bearing on it?" Nick inquired.

"Yes, absolutely all," said Gordon. "I know nothing whatever about the crime itself, Nick, nor have I the slightest suspicion as to who committed it."

"How did you return home?"

"I took a subway train."

"Were you then in disguise?"

"No. I removed it before arriving at the subway station, and thrust it into my pocket."

"Did you meet any one with whom you are acquainted?"

"I don't think so. I noticed no one. I hurried home and went directly to bed. Really, Nick, that is all I can tell you."

"That will answer, then," said the detective. "Are these the articles brought from your residence?"

"Yes."

Nick had arisen abruptly and turned to a table near one of the walls. Lying on it were the disjointed sections of a burglar's jimmy, one of which was stained with blood; also Gordon's evening suit, his overcoat, and the disguise worn the previous night.

Nick examined all of them carefully, noting the spots of blood on the black suit, consisting of several scattered drops on the left sleeve and left pants leg, as if bespattered from a gushing wound.

There was only a single spot on the overcoat, however, and that was near the bloodstained pocket.

"It's a mystery to me, Nick, a damnable mystery," said Gordon, after waiting for the detective to express an opinion. "This is likely to ruin my chances of election, to say nothing of——"

"Say nothing is what you must do," Nick interrupted. "I will try to ferret out the truth, Gordon, before the publication of the superficial facts can do you any harm."

"A thousand thanks, Nick," said Gordon gratefully. "I knew I could depend on you."

"We will confide in the commissioner, however, and I think I can prevail on him to liberate you and state that your arrest was due to a mistake.'

"Really? I would be doubly grateful for that."

"The commissioner knows you as well as I do, Gordon, and he will realize that your defeat in the near election may result from holding you under arrest. That must be prevented, if possible."

"I will return home, Nick, and remain there subject to his orders," said Gordon, eager to bring it about. "Or he can have an officer go there to watch me."

"I think I can make him see, Gordon, that you are most likely the victim of a plot, rather than guilty of this crime," Nick replied. "All this will necessitate my breaking a record to find absolute evidence in proof of it, however, and I shall leave you immediately after talking with him. You keep your mouth closed after that, and be patient till you hear from me."

"I will do both, Nick," Gordon assured him.

"I'll be off, then, after a talk with the commissioner. Come with me. I also want him to hold these articles subject to my order. I think I may find a use for them."

CHAPTER IV.

NICK'S CAPITAL WORK.

Nick Carter easily won the commissioner to his own views, and he then returned at top speed to the Columbus Avenue flat. None could have realized more keenly that time was of value, that the political fate of his friend and client, to say nothing of his life, even, depended upon what he could quickly accomplish.

Nick felt that he was equal to the emergency, however, as well as sure of his man, and he was shaping his course accordingly. It was precisely half past ten when he arrived, for the second time, at the home of the murdered woman.

Hawley, the reporter, still was waiting for information. Other reporters had arrived and were blocking the steps. Most of them recognized the detective and awaited him eagerly.

"Nothing doing, gentlemen, at present," said Nick, threading his way between them. "It's too early in the game. Wait till I have dug up something definite."

"But I have been told that the Honorable Arthur Gordon has been arrested on suspicion," said a persistent one. "Is that true, Mr. Carter?"

"No, no, quite the contrary," Nick coolly asserted. "Gordon went down to headquarters voluntarily, merely to explain certain circumstances that seemed at that time to have a bearing on the case. That was all a mistake. Gordon is at liberty and has returned to his residence in Riverside Drive. If you publish anything to the contrary, you will make a most egregious blunder."

"But he was placed under arrest, wasn't he?" Hawley demanded impulsively.

Nick swung round and eyed him more sharply. There was something about him he did not fancy, something that in a vague way impressed him that they had met before, but he then was in too great haste to seriously consider the fleeting impression. He lingered only for a moment, replying a bit curtly:

"No, no, there has been no arrest. Nothing of the kind. No arrests will be made, in fact, until evidence is found that will warrant it. That's all, gentlemen, at present."

Nick turned with the last and strode into the hall.

Hawley gazed after him furtively, with eyes dilating and his pointed beard twitching nervously. He remained only for a moment longer, then descended the steps and hurried away.

Nick found Chick and Phelan patiently waiting for him, though the former immediately greeted him with an anxious inquiry.

"Well, is it as bad as it looks?"

"It's bad enough, Chick," Nick replied, removing his overcoat and tossing it on a chair in the front room.

"I reckoned you'd think so," said Phelan.

Nick turned and replied more impressively:

"That isn't all I think. I am going to confide in you, Phelan, and tell you what I have done and why I have done it."

Phelan instantly turned more grave.

"It goes without saying, Nick, that whatever you do or have done will be for the best," he replied. "Do you think I made a mistake in having Gordon arrested so quickly?"

"It would have been better to have deferred it," said Nick. "I admit, nevertheless, that the circumstances seemed to warrant it."

"I certainly thought so."

"That's neither here nor there, now, for I have talked with the chief and had Gordon liberated. I gave the chief my word that I would find evidence refuting that involving Gordon, and that I would also run down the real criminals. It now is up to me to make good."

"I hope you've not bitten off more than you can chew," said Phelan inelegantly.

"I don't think so."

"What did Gordon say for himself?" Chick inquired.

Nick then told both what Gordon had stated, also his own reasons for the steps he had taken.

"Either he did this, or he did not," he said forcibly in conclusion. "I feel sure he did not. Who did kill this woman, then, and with what motive? We now will try to find out."

"Gordon's story certainly is a plausible one," Chick declared. "It explains his visit, his letter, and why the disguise was in his pocket. All were mystifying points, as well as seriously suspicious."

"But think what it doesn't explain," argued Phelan, still doubtful. "If others killed this woman after Gordon departed, and if he went directly home, as stated, how came blood on his garments, even in his overcoat pocket, as if that gory jimmy had been carried away in it? How came the jimmy under shrubbery in Gordon's grounds? It must be the jimmy with which the woman was killed. Where are the Madison letters, if he didn't get them, and why——"

"Hold your horses, Phelan," Nick interrupted, then hurriedly searching the open desk. "Don't ask so many questions. They cannot be answered in advance of an investigation. We have only Tilly Lancey's word for it, mind you, that a package of Madison's letters were here, aside from the fact that some one broke into the desk. They are no longer here, at all events, for I have searched it thoroughly."

"By Jove, this may have been a job to kill two birds with one stone," said Chick.

"What d'ye mean?" Phelan growled.

"A job not only to get the Madison letters, but also to do it in such a way to fix the crime upon Gordon and defeat him in the coming election."

"Humph!" grunted Phelan.

"Could you find any evidence, Chick, that others were here last night?" Nick paused and inquired.

"Not an atom, Nick."

"You searched——"

"Everywhere," Chick interrupted. "The only window tampered with is that through which Gilroy entered this morning. There is not a sign of anything more. If others were here, they must have been admitted by the woman herself or——"

"Stop a moment," Nick cut in. "Here is a partly written letter addressed to a woman named Cora, merely an invitation to dine."

"That's Cora Cavendish," said Phelan. "She has been Tilly Lancey's running mate for a year. She's a bird of the same feather."

"Where does she live?" asked Chick.

"She has apartments in the Nordeck, in Forty-fourth Street. She's a fly jade, if ever there was one."

"Possibly, then——"

"Wait!" Nick again interrupted. "Here's an important point. It convinces me that I am right."

"Right in what?" came from Phelan.

"That Tilly Lancey did not write these words on the wall."

"Great Scott! Is that so? What's the point?"

Nick displayed the partly written letter found in the desk, then turned to the wall on which the incriminating words were inscribed.

"Notice the capital A in Gordon's given name," said he, pointing. "It has the proper form for the capital. Here, in this letter, are no less than three of the same capitals, and all of a different shape."

"How different?"

"They are the enlarged form of the small letter, a form which many persons use when writing that capital," said Nick. "If it appeared only once, it might be attributed to chance, but all three show plainly that Tilly Lancey habitually wrote the capital A in the form of the small letter. Here is the other form, however, in this writing on the wall. Don't expect me to believe that this woman would, under such circumstances, have changed her habit of writing."

"By Jove, that is important," said Chick, eyes lighting.

"But why blood on the tip of her forefinger?" Phelan protested. "Isn't that enough evidence that she——"

"It is not reliable evidence," Nick objected, interrupting.

"But the size of her finger tip corresponds with the marks on the wall."

"That cuts no ice," Nick again insisted. "Clever crooks, bent upon this deception, would have dragged the woman near enough to the wall, after killing her, to grasp her lax hand and finger and forced it to inscribe the desired words. That is precisely what was done. This inconsistency in the capital A alone convinces me of that."

"I am not so sure of it, Carter, all the same," Phelan still objected.

"Well, I am, Phelan, and I was reasonably sure of it from the first," said Nick.

"Why so?"

"Notice her fractured skull. Such wounds are prohibitive. Tilly Lancey did not recover consciousness, to say nothing of having revived sufficiently to write these words. Furthermore, if she had, she would not have done so."

"You mean?"

"Here is the telephone stand scarce three feet away," Nick continued. "With consciousness and reason restored, and sufficient strength to have dragged herself to the wall and written these words, she would have taken a simpler method to expose her assailant."

"You mean with the telephone."

"Certainly. It was directly in front of her. She must have seen it. Even if she could not rise, she could have tipped over the stand and got hold of the instrument. In half the time it would have taken her to dip her finger in blood and write these words, she could have told the whole story to a telephone operator, or even have called up the police."

"By gracious, Nick, that admits of no argument," said Chick emphatically. "She surely would have done so. The several circumstances combined leave no room for a doubt."

"I think so, too," Phelan nodded. "I guess you are right, Carter, after all. I blundered like a fool in getting after Gordon so quickly."

Nick did not reply.

Crouching beside the corpse of the murdered woman, he took a lens from his pocket and examined her blood-stained finger tip, her hand and wrist, the several wounds in her matted hair, and then he surprised both of his observers by taking out his own handkerchief and dipping it in some of the partly congealed blood, afterward folding it and replacing it in his pocket.

"What's that for?" Phelan inquired, with brows knit perplexedly.

"Further study," Nick tersely replied, rising. "I am going to leave you, Phelan, to notify the coroner and take the necessary legal steps. Bear in mind, however, that all this is strictly confidential for the present. Publication might prove disastrous."

"Trust me," Phelan assured him. "I'm dumb, Nick, till you remove the seal of silence. You have something else up your sleeve, I infer."

"Exactly."

"Go ahead, then, and good luck. I'll look after things here while you get in your work."

"Good enough, Phelan," said Nick, shaking hands with him. "I'll reciprocate in some way when——"

"Cut that!" Phelan interrupted. "You know I am always at your service. Go ahead and get in your work."

Nick did not delay his departure. He left the house with Chick and returned to his touring car.

"Home, Danny," he directed. "I'll let him drop me there, Chick, and then take you to headquarters. I want Gordon's garments and that bloodstained jimmie. Tell the commissioner I will be responsible for their safe return. Bring them to the library."

CHAPTER V.

NICK CARTER'S ANALYSIS.

"Yes, it is human blood. There is no question about it. It is human blood—but not from the veins of Matilda Lancey."

These declarations came from Nick Carter about three o'clock that afternoon. They were addressed to Chick and his junior assistant, Patsy Garvan.

All three detectives then were seated at a broad zinc-covered table in Nick's finely equipped laboratory, a large rear room in his Madison Avenue residence.

Lying on the table were the bloodstained articles belonging to Arthur Gordon, the disjointed jimmy, and also

the handkerchief which Nick had dipped in the blood of the murdered woman.

Near by stood a costly microscope, a stand of small test tubes, several vials containing chemicals, together with numerous other articles which Nick had been using.

He replaced on the table one section of the jimmy, while speaking, and Patsy took it up to gaze at the dark-red stains on it, remarking, with some surprise:

"Human blood, chief, but not from the veins of the murdered woman? Gee whiz! that's mighty significant. Are you sure of it?"

"Absolutely sure," said Nick.

"You now have tested the blood on each of these articles?" Chick inquired.

"Yes."

"And the results are convincing?"

"Decidedly convincing," said Nick, with a look of satisfaction on his strong, clean-cut face. "There is no question as to the reliability of a microscopic examination of particles of blood, if made by a person thoroughly informed on the subject. I have, as you know, made an exhaustive study of it."

"I am aware of that, Nick, of course."

"The blood of no two creatures is precisely alike," Nick continued. "Under the microscope, and with proper tests, that of two human beings, even, presents certain distinct differences, often by a small margin, of course, but nevertheless clearly distinct."

"So I have read," Chick nodded.

"It is perfectly easy to tell the blood of a white man from that of a negro, that of a lower animal from that of a man, or that of one animal from that of another, as well as to determine the animal from which it comes. That is because the blood of each crystallizes in invariable definite forms."

"Gee, that's some study!" Patsy remarked sententiously.

"The existence of disease is also apparent under the microscope and with proper tests," Nick went on. "Science immediately recognizes one from another. Thin, anæmic blood presents a distinctly different appearance from the strong, rich blood of a vigorous person. That's the very point, in connection with this case, without further elaboration on the subject."

"These bloodstains tell the story, do they?" questioned Patsy.

"They tell part of it, Patsy, with absolute certainty," Nick replied. "The blood on my handkerchief, which we know positively came from Matilda Lancey, is very rich with red corpuscles, obviously that of a strong, healthy woman."

"Tilly Lancey looked it," Chick observed.

"The blood on these articles, however, shows a distinct difference," said Nick. "There is a decided lack of the red corpuscles. It is thin and anæmic. It is human blood, nevertheless, and it came from a woman. The proportion of red corpuscles in the stains on each of these articles, with the exception of my handkerchief, plainly shows that same anæmic condition."

"In other words, then, the stains on the jimmy and on Gordon's garments are not caused by the blood of Tilly Lancey," said Chick.

"They are not," Nick replied. "I am absolutely sure of that. It is distinctly different from the blood on my handkerchief. That on these other articles came from a rather frail and delicate woman, very probably with a tendency to consumption."

"Gee whiz! that suggests something to me, chief," said Patsy, drawing nearer the table.

"What is that?"

"I have frequently seen Tilly Lancey with the woman referred to by Phelan as her running mate, the woman named Cora Cavendish. She is just that type, chief, slender and noticeably pale, barring the rouge with which she hides it."

"That is suggestive, indeed, Patsy," Nick agreed. "But I already suspected that Cora Cavendish had a hand in this job."

"Why so, chief?"

"Because I now am sure that it was a frame-up, and because the intimacy between Cora Cavendish and Tilly Lancey, now knowing that the blood on these articles came from a second woman, probably made the job possible."

"I see."

"In other words," Nick added; "I suspect that Cora Cavendish and one or more confederates are responsible for the whole business. I'm doubly sure of it, in fact, if she is that anæmic type of woman."

"By Jove, I think you may be right," said Chick, more earnestly. "But there are a good many points that I cannot fathom."

"To begin with?" inquired Nick.

"We must assume that Gordon has told the truth, of course, and that he left Tilly Lancey alive just before midnight."

"Certainly."

"And that he immediately hastened home?"

"I have no doubt of it."

"How, then, came the blood on his garments?"

"Bear in mind, Chick, that it is not Tilly Lancey's blood," said Nick. "It is some that was obtained for this job. The crooks knew that human blood would be required, as tests would surely be made after the crime; but they overlooked the fact, or were ignorant of it, that tests would reveal the difference between it and that of their victim."

"You now think, I infer, that the blood was drawn from the veins of Cora Cavendish."

"I do," Nick nodded. "Only a small quantity would have been required. It could have been easily obtained by an incision in one of the veins of her arm, and received in a small vial."

"But when and how could it have been spattered upon Gordon's garments, to say nothing of the smooches in his overcoat pocket?"

"Easily," said Nick.

"Tell me."

"Assume, for instance, that several persons comprised the gang. They laid their plans, paved the way to execute them, and provided themselves with the blood required."

"Well?"

"Tilly Lancey may have been duped into admitting one of them to her flat last night, possibly more, and they may have been concealed there during her interview with Gordon. That could have been craftily accomplished by Cora Cavendish, if she was out to deceive and murder her intimate friend."

"I admit that much, Nick, of course," Chick allowed.

"Tilly Lancey could have been killed, then, and prob-

ably was, immediately after Gordon left the house," Nick continued. "She was struck down with a jimmy, which was afterward used to pry open her desk, and later carried away by her assailants."

"But you say the blood on this jimmy is not Tilly Lancey's blood."

"True," Nick nodded. "This is not the jimmy used for the murder, mind you, but one precisely like it."

"Ah, I see."

"The crooks were working along fine lines," Nick pointed out. "They wanted a weapon found that would correspond with the wounds inflicted. So they got two like jimmies, one of which they stained with blood and concealed after a fashion in Gordon's grounds. I say after a fashion, Chick, because they designedly put it where it would soon be discovered."

"Two like jimmies, eh?" said Chick. "You may be right. I think you are, in fact, or the blood on this one would be that of the murdered woman."

"Surely. That's the very point."

"But who stained this one and put it where it was found?"

"Another of the crooks, one who was waiting outside of the house while Gordon was there," said Nick. "He was the one who had the vial of blood, also the duplicate jimmy. The vial may have been provided with a stopper like those in the bottles used by a barber, from which a few drops can be easily shaken."

"I see the point."

"Gordon, mind you, did not put on his overcoat until after he had walked about a block," Nick continued. "It would have been child's play for the crook to have followed him, and, while passing him, to have stealthily dashed a few drops of the blood on his garments."

"That's right, chief, for fair," cried Patsy. "There would have been nothing to it."

"Gordon was a bit upset, moreover, and he did not afterward notice the spots on the black cloth, which would have quickly absorbed it."

"All that is plain enough," Chick admitted. "But how about the overcoat pocket. How was the blood put into that?"

"It would have been equally easy."

"By what means?"

"Very much the same," said Nick. "The crook could have continued to follow him, taking the same seat with him in the subway train. He could have stealthily soiled his own hand with a few drops of the blood, and then slipped it for a moment into Gordon's overcoat pocket. Any sly fellow might do that."

"Very true," Chick nodded. "There is no denying it."

"He then must have followed Gordon home, where he stained the duplicate jimmy with blood and hid it under the shrubbery. All would have been very simple and easily accomplished."

"I now admit it, Nick," Chick said thoughtfully. "But what about the drops of blood in the front room and hall adjoining the flat?"

"That was Tilly Lancey's blood," said Nick. "The crooks who killed her scattered that trail of blood, that it might indicate that it had dropped from the hand of her assassin when he left the house. That naturally would appear to have been Gordon."

"I agree with you," Chick again assented. "You certainly have gone deep below the surface, Nick, and developed a plausible theory."

"Plausible!" exclaimed Patsy, a bit derisively. "Jiminy crickets! that plausible gag don't half express it, Chick. It's a copper-riveted cinch. There's nothing else to it."

"There is considerable more to it, Patsy," Nick corrected. "The theory alone is not enough. It might fall flat on the ears of a jury of boneheads. It's not easy to penetrate solid ivory."

"That's right, too," said Patsy, laughing.

"We must clinch it, therefore, by learning positively whether Cora Cavendish had a hand in this crime. We must discover the identity of her confederates, and round them up in such a way as to fix the crime upon them."

"That's the proper caper, chief, for fair."

"Have you any suspicions, Nick, as to their identity?" Chick inquired.

"Aside from Cora Cavendish?"

"Certainly."

"Yes."

"On what do you base it, and whom have you in mind?"

"To begin with, Chick, I base it on the probable existence of the Madison letters, and the fact that they were missing this morning from Tilly Lancey's desk. Bear in mind that she told Gordon about them and invited him to her flat to read them. She may have told Cora Cavendish about them, also, and if double-crossed by the latter, as I suspect, she certainly had no apprehension of being murdered when she invited Gordon to her flat."

"Surely not."

"It is a safe assumption, then, that the package of letters was in her desk last evening, as she told him."

"True."

"That is further confirmed by the fact that the desk was broken open by her assailants, who probably could not find the key. If the murder of Tilly Lancey was their only object, they would not have broken open the desk."

"True again," Chick nodded.

"There was a package of compromising letters, then, and they now are in the hands of the woman's assassins—barring one very possible contingency."

"What is that?"

"That the man who wrote them, whose reputation they evidently involved, was back of the whole job in order to get the letters, and to incriminate Arthur Gordon as to insure his defeat in the coming election. He now may have the letters."

"Jack Madison," said Chick.

"Yes."

"It seems incredible that he——"

"Oh, I anticipate your objection," Nick interrupted. "But as I told you this morning, Chick, men with political ambitions some men, I mean, are capable of any degree of knavery."

"That's right, too, chief," declared Patsy.

"Madison is a strong, aggressive bulldog type of man, and his standing as a lawyer is far from the best," Nick added. "He was abroad without his wife and family for several weeks last year and I happen to know that Tilly Lancey then was absent from New York. They returned at pretty near the same time. One must draw one's own conclusions. Be that as it may, I suspect Madi-

son of knowing something about this affair, whether he was responsible for it, or not."

"My money goes on that, chief," said Patsy. "We must get after him."

"I intend doing so."

"Have you any other suspicions?"

"One other, Chick."

"Namely?"

"It is rather more than a suspicion," Nick continued, with brows drooping. "I felt it vaguely this morning, but I then was in too great haste to be deeply enough impressed to act upon it, or rightly interpret it."

"When do you mean?"

"When I returned from police headquarters and found that reporter, Hawley, still waiting at Tilly Lancey's door," said Nick. "I feel sure, now, that I know why he was there, and how he happened to be there so far in advance of other genuine reporters."

"Genuine?"

"That's the word."

"You think he is not a reporter."

"I would stake my reputation on that," said Nick, with ominous intonation. "I eyed the man more closely than when I first saw him, Chick, and it was then that I vaguely felt that we had met before to-day. It came over me all of a sudden, a short time ago, just who he is and where we met him."

"A crook?"

"The worst of crooks," Nick grimly nodded. "The very man to have devised such a job as this and to have pulled it off successfully, most likely with the sanction of Jack Madison. His disguise was perfect, however, or so nearly that it blinded me for a time. I refer to the rascal who twice has committed crimes involving Arthur Gordon, and who——"

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Patsy, interrupting. "I'm on to your curves, chief. You mean Mortimer Deland."

"None other," said Nick.

"By Jove, that alone would clinch the theory you have formed," said Chick. "If Deland is in this job, if you really are right——"

"I know I am right," Nick interposed. "I ought to have instantly recalled the eyes of that rascal, at least, as I since have done. It is nearly a year, however, since we last run him down and sent him to prison, from which he was afterward brought into court on a habeas-corpus writ and contrived to escape from the two officers in charge of him."

"I remember," Chick nodded. "We decided that he had fled to Europe."

"That then seemed to be his most likely course," Nick replied. "It now is ten to one, however, that he decided to lie low right here, and where he since has fallen in with Cora Cavendish. He may have learned from her about the Madison letters, and with her framed up this rascally job."

"By Jove, that now seems more than probable," Chick said, with some enthusiasm. "You are weaving a net with fine meshes, Nick, for fair. No fish of Deland's size could slip through it."

"Not if we can get him into it," supplemented Patsy.

"We will set about that without more delay," Nick declared, rising abruptly. "You slip into a disguise, Patsy, and get after Cora Cavendish."

"Leave her to me, chief."

"Find out where she is and what she is doing, and with what man she has been chiefly friendly of late. It's ten to one that the man, in whatever disguise you find him, will be Mortimer Deland."

"Shall I arrest him, chief, if sure of his identity?" asked Patsy, eagerly starting to prepare for his work.

"No, not immediately," Nick directed. "We want all of his confederates and positive evidence against them. Watch him, or the woman, until that can be obtained."

"I've got you, chief."

"In the meantime, Chick, we will get after Madison and find out with whom he is having covert relations," Nick added. "You go to his law office, Chick, and see what you can learn."

"Leave him to me, Nick, in case he is there."

"I will go to his residence, to make doubly sure of finding him, and we then shall have the ground pretty well covered," Nick declared, as all three hastened to the library. "You both may be governed by circumstances, of course, and we will compare notes between now and midnight—barring that we accomplish something much more to the purpose. That's all. We will get a move on at once."

CHAPTER VI.

A PIECE OF PLASTER.

It was after four o'clock when Patsy Garvan emerged into Madison Avenue to begin the work assigned him, starting from home somewhat in advance of Nick and Chick, and heading immediately for Forty-fourth Street.

"It's no dead open-and-shut cinch where to find a blackbird as fly as Cora Cavendish at this hour of the day," he said to himself. "She may be taking in a matinée, or the movies, or having a spin with some gink in a buzz car. I'll tackle her apartments in the Nordeck, for a starter, and if I can learn nothing there, or from the office clerk—well, I'll cross that bridge when I get to it. I sure have got to find her by some hook or crook."

Ten minutes brought Patsy to his destination, an apartment house in Forty-fourth Street, patronized largely by women of the same social status as his quarry. He entered the office on the street floor, when, with a thrill of satisfaction, he beheld the very woman he was seeking.

"Gee, this is going some!" he mentally exclaimed. "There she is, now, and rigged for the street. I'll buy a cigar, at least, as a blind for butting in here."

Although in disguise and quite sure that the woman did not know him by sight, even, Patsy reasoned that any unusual incident might arouse her misgivings, if she really was engaged in the knavery Nick suspected.

Patsy sauntered to a cigar case near the clerk's desk, therefore, and made his purchase without another glance at the woman.

Cora Cavendish was emerging from the elevator when Patsy entered. She was a tall, slender woman close upon thirty, with an abundance of bleached hair, thin features, a rather pretty face aside from its paleness, and a certain sinister and crafty expression in her gray eyes. She was fashionably clad and was drawing on a pair of long, lavender kid gloves.

Passing within three feet of Patsy, and wafting to his nostrils a pronounced aroma of heliotrope sachet, she paused for a moment and said to the clerk, with a quick and somewhat metallic voice:

"If Guy Morton shows up and asks for me, Mr. Hardy, tell him I'll return in twenty minutes."

"All right, Miss Cavendish," nodded the clerk. "I'll bear it in mind."

"I have a date with him," Cora added. "But he may tire of waiting and come looking for me."

"Tire of waiting for you—impossible!" Hardy observed, with a grin.

"Oh, quit your kidding!" retorted the woman, laughing. "You hand him my message, Hardy, and give him the key to my suite."

"I'll do so, Cora."

"Good for you. Tell him to wait, mind you."

"No need to tell him that," Hardy returned, as the woman swept out of the office.

Patsy already had left the counter after lighting his cigar, and he passed out only a few yards behind the woman.

"Now, by Jove, if she doesn't take a taxi, I shall have soft walking," he said to himself. "Guy Morton, eh? I never heard of him. When I see him, if so lucky, I may possibly know his face."

Patsy's wish was granted, in that Cora Cavendish did not take a conveyance. She walked briskly through Forty-fourth Street to Sixth Avenue, then turned north and increased her pace, gliding with a sort of sinuous grace through the throng of pedestrians.

"Gee! she's in some hurry," thought Patsy, at a discreet distance behind her. "If she can go to keep a date with the said Morton and return to her apartments in twenty minutes, she cannot be going very far. To some other hotel, perhaps, or some saloon with a side door for the fair sex."

Patsy had hit the nail very nearly on the head. A few minutes later he saw his quarry enter a popular café in one of the side streets, where she paused and questioned a man seated at a high desk near the door.

She evidently obtained the information she wanted. For, passing directly through the place, Cora entered one of the several private dining rooms in the rear, quickly closing the door.

It was not done so quickly, however, as to prevent Patsy, who had immediately stepped into the front saloon, from getting a momentary glimpse of the interior of the private room.

He saw that the lace-draped window was partly open, that a man answering Nick's description of Hawley was seated at a damask-covered table, and that on the latter stood a bottle of wine, partly drank, and two glasses. He also saw, nevertheless, that there was no other occupant of the room.

"He's still waiting for her," he reasoned. "Waiting for her with an extra glass. That's the reporter Nick described, as sure as I'm a foot high, and probably Deland himself. I'll mighty soon find out."

Patsy turned and found the man at the desk eying him suspiciously, and he took no chance of a subsequent warning being sent to the suspected couple, but immediately seized the bull by the horns. Stepping close to the desk, he displayed his detective badge and said quietly, but in a way he knew would be effective:

"I am in Nick Carter's employ, and I happen to know that you are the man who runs this place. If you wish to continue running it, you hand me straight goods and keep your trap closed. Whom has Cora Cavendish gone in there to meet?"

The change that came over the man's face convinced Patsy that he needed to say nothing more threatening. The mention of Nick Carter's name had been enough. The man at once replied, moreover, with lowered voice:

"I'll not yip; not on your life. She has joined a man named Morton. He's been waiting for her."

"How long?"

"About twenty minutes."

"What do you know about him?"

"Nothing; not a thing. Both come here now and then to lunch, or to buy wine. I have known the woman for a time, but not the man."

"Is either adjoining dining room vacant?"

"Yes, both of them."

"I'll go into the one on the right," said Patsy, with a glance at the several closed doors. "Call that waiter away, so he'll not be butting in there."

"You mean into your room?"

"That's what. Let him serve the couple, if they order anything, but you make sure that he doesn't put them wise to me, or to anything else, or your license will go so high in the air you could not see it with the Lick telescope."

The proprietory actually turned pale, so impressive was Patsy, and he muttered quickly:

"You leave it to me. I'll fix the waiter, all right. Go ahead as soon as you please."

"Gee! I've got him well muzzled," thought Patsy, now seeking the adjoining dining room. "He looks as if I already had put his place on the blink. He wouldn't dare say his soul's his own. Now, by Jove, I must get in unheard."

Patsy opened and closed the door noiselessly, entering the room. It was like that occupied by Cora Cavendish and her companion, but the plastered wall between the two rooms precluded playing the eavesdropper in that direction.

Turning to the window, therefore, Patsy began to raise it by slow degrees until he could lean out cautiously. He then found that the other window was only four feet away, and through the opening, for it had been raised several inches for ventilation, he could hear the voices of the suspected couple.

One object caught his eye, moreover, that alone served to confirm the theory Nick had formed.

Cora Cavendish had taken a chair, but had drawn it away from the table. She was seated close to the open window. She had removed her long lavender gloves and her left arm was rested on the window sill, her fingers toying with the lace draperies.

Between the filmy curtains Patsy caught sight of her hand and arm, bare nearly to the elbow.

On the fleshy part of it, directly over one of the blueish veins, was nearly a square inch of pink court plaster.

"By gracious, that clinches it!" thought Patsy. "The chief is right. That plaster covers the cut from which some blood was taken. Give us time, now, and we'll surely deliver the goods."

In the meantime, with ears alert, he could hear Cora Cavendish saying a bit sharply, as if irritated:

"I cannot be in two places at once, can I? Cut out

your kicking and get down to business. I came here as soon as I could after doing the other job."

"Well, what's the result?" demanded her companion curtly. "Did you see him?"

"Gee! that's Deland's voice, all right," thought Patsy. "He is not disguising it, now, and there's no mistaking it."

"Sure I saw him," said Cora, still snappishly.

"What did he say?"

"What you'll not like to hear, Mortie, take it from me."

"Use my other name, you fool! I'm not looking for a free ride up the river."

"None can hear us in this place," said Cora, less petulantly. "I'll tell you what he said, Guy. He called me down in good shape, along with all the rest of us, over my shoulder. He's up in the air a mile."

"He'll come down," said Deland, with sinister coldness. "Don't be so sure of it."

"I'll find a way to bring him down, then."

"He's nursing an awful kick."

"He'll kick against a brick wall, Cora, in that case," Deland said, with an icy assurance that Patsy readily remembered. "I'll puncture his tires so quickly that he'll turn turtle."

"Well, mebbe so," allowed the woman doubtfully.

"What more did he say?" Deland continued. "Did you get any part of the coin?"

"Not a copper of it," said Cora curtly.

"Why was that?"

"He says that he won't settle."

"Won't settle!"

Patsy heard Deland's teeth meet with a sudden fierce snap.

"That's what he said, Guy, and he as good as fired me out of the crib," replied Cora inelegantly. "You'll have to see him yourself if you——"

"See him—you bet I'll see him," Deland broke forth in tones that would have chilled an ordinary hearer. "I'll see him all right, and I'll lose no time about it."

"What need of rushing things?"

"Need enough."

"Why? Won't it keep?"

"No, hang it, nothing keeps when that infernal sleuth takes up a case." Deland snarled viciously. "You don't yet know what has happened."

"Sleuth—what sleuth?" Cora's arm vanished like a flash from Patsy's cautious gaze, when she swung round in her chair. "You don't mean——"

"You ought to guess what I mean, Cora, and whom."

"Not—not Nick Carter?"

"Yes. May the devil get him—and I'll help him do so."

"What has occurred?" Cora demanded, voice quaking.

"Carter began an investigation this morning," Deland now informed her. "I was there in disguise to learn who was put on the case and what was suspected. Phelan, the headquarters man, was the first to show up, and he played dead easy into our hands."

"He got after Gordon?"

"He sent a gun to get him, and I now know that Gordon was arrested and taken down to headquarters, along with the evidence against him."

"Why are you so stewed, then? That ought to be good enough."

"So it would be—if it had lasted!" snapped Deland.

"Lasted—what do you mean?"

"I mean that Carter showed up at the house a little later and had a look at things," Deland explained. "He didn't know me from a side of leather, but he refused to let me in or to put me wise to what he suspected. He flew down to headquarters, instead, and Gordon was liberated."

"Is that so?"

"When Carter returned he told the reporters that there had been no arrest, and that the whole business in so far as Gordon was concerned was a mistake."

"That looks mighty bad," said Cora, after a moment. "How do you size it up?"

"Hang the cursed dick, Cora, there's only one way to size it up," Deland again replied, with a snarl. "Carter got wise to something, enough to warrant his taking the chance of liberating Gordon."

"That's evident enough."

"I then decided to bolt. I thought he might light on me next. That's why I'm stewed and so hot around the collar," Deland went on, with bitter ferocity.

"But this job——"

"The job must be wound up at once," snapped Deland, again interrupting. "We must have that promised coin before Carter can get in his work. Won't settle, eh? By heavens, I'll soon see whether he'll settle. He'll settle, all right, or he'll hear something drop."

"But——"

"There aren't any buts to it," Deland fiercely insisted. "This trick must be turned and turned at once. Did you leave him at home?"

"Yes, of course."

"I'll get after him, then, and bring him down to cases. You move lively, too, and get next to Flynn. Tell him where I have gone and that I may need help. Send Plugger out there with Daggett and Tobey. Tell them to nose round till they find out what's doing. Come on at once. There's no time to lose."

Patsy Garvan heard the viciously determined rascal push back his chair from the table with a violence that upset one of the glasses and broke it. The tinkling of the falling glass easily reached his ears, and in another moment he heard the couple hurriedly leaving the room.

"Gee! he's off with blood in his eye, all right," thought Patsy. "He must have been talking about Jack Madison, though it's no dead-sure thing. I'll follow him and find out. Plugger Flynn, eh? So he was in the job, along with Jim Daggett and Buck Tobey, three fine East Side blacklegs. Thundering guns! I'm on the hind seat of the wagon, but I don't believe they can shake me."

The last arose in his mind when, emerging from the private dining room, he discovered that Deland and Cora Cavendish already were passing into the street, in which the daylight of the October afternoon was merging into dusk.

Seeing that neither of the suspects was looking back, however, Patsy darted after them and quickly reached the street.

Deland was springing into a taxicab, and in another moment he was riding rapidly away, so rapidly that pursuit was out of the question.

Cora Cavendish paused briefly on the curbing to watch the swiftly departing car, and then she turned abruptly and hurried away.

"Hang it! I've lost him temporarily, at least, do what I might," Patsy muttered. "There's nothing to it, now. I have only one string to my bow. I will follow the woman."

CHAPTER VII.

A BLOW FROM BEHIND.

Nick Carter did not hurry to arrive at the suburban residence of Mr. John Madison. He hardly expected, in fact, to find him at home before early evening; but he wanted to see him when he did arrive.

It was close upon six o'clock when Nick entered a gate leading into the extensive side grounds, and dusk then had deepened into darkness.

Only a single light was to be seen in the imposing wooden dwelling, and that shone out faintly through the glass walls of a large conservatory attached to the house. It came from a window beyond the projecting hothouse.

"That don't look as if many of the family are at home," thought Nick, stepping lightly over the gravel walk that wound between the trees of a park and led to a side door of the house.

"It may be that only his wife and children are here, though servants are essential to—humph!" Nick abruptly digressed. "It is barely possible that he has sent them away, servants and all, if he really is engaged in the knavery I suspect. Discretion certainly would impel some such step."

Nick turned the corner of the conservatory, then saw a brighter beam of light from under the lowered shade of a library window. He crept near enough to peer into the room.

There was only one occupant—the man the detective was seeking.

Mr. John Madison was seated at a flat, cloth-topped desk in the middle of the spacious room. It was covered with pamphlets, documents, and writing materials. A tall library lamp with a pale-green silk shade stood near by. Its rays lent an unnatural hue to the man's face, a sort of ghastly, greenish pallor seen neither in life nor death.

He was a powerful, imposing man, with broad shoulders and a large head. He was smoothly shaved, with strong, aggressive features, a square jaw, and thin lips, heavy brows, and a mop of black hair.

He sat gazing intently at the top of his desk, but Nick saw at a glance that his mind was elsewhere. His thin lips were drawn. His heavy brows hung like frowning battlements over his vacant eyes. His large hands were gripping the arms of his chair.

Nick moved on quietly to the side door and touched the electric bell.

It was not answered for several moments. Then a heavy tread could be heard in the side hall.

"No servant ever treads like that," thought Nick. "He could not hold his job."

The door was opened by Mr. Madison himself. He turned a switch key in the near casing, and a flood of light filled the side hall and fell on the figure and face of his visitor.

Madison recoiled slightly, then instantly caught himself.

"Why, good evening, Mr. Carter," said he, with his sonorous voice only a bit unsteady on the first two words.

"Good evening, Mr. Madison."

"This is a surprise. Walk in," said the lawyer. "I am glad to see you."

Nick entered, smiling and shaking the other's extended hand. It felt cold and clammy in that of the detective.

"I came out this way on business, Mr. Madison, so I dropped in only for a short call," Nick observed. "I want to discuss the approaching election with you, or one feature of it."

"Ah! Is that so?"

"I hardly expected, nevertheless, to find you at this hour," Nick added.

"I have not been in town to-day," Madison replied deliberately.

"No?"

"I have not been feeling well. My wife and children are visiting in Boston for a few days, and I have given the servants a like holiday. Come into the library. Sit down and help yourself. There are matches in the tray."

Madison placed a box of cigars on the desk while speaking, then resumed the swivel chair, from which he had arisen to admit his visitor.

Nick had removed his hat and overcoat and left them in the side hall. He took a chair directly opposite the burly politician. He had, apparently, no aggressive intentions.

The aroma of pinks and heliotrope was wafted from an alcove near by, from which a door led into the conservatory. The door was open a few inches, admitting the scent of the flowers.

"You are not seriously ill, I hope," Nick remarked, while he accepted a cigar and lit it.

"Oh, no!" Madison shook his head and ran his fingers through his hair. "It's a touch of bronchitis, brought on by too much speaking in political rallies. That raises the deuce with one's throat. A day or two of rest will restore me."

"I hope so," said Nick.

"You said, I think, that you wish to discuss some feature of the present campaign. To what did you refer?"

Nick dropped his burned match into a cuspidor.

"To the hard fight you and Gordon are making to carry your congressional district," he remarked, hooking his thumbs through the armholes of his vest and blowing a wreath of smoke toward the ceiling.

"It is a hard fight, Carter, no mistake."

"Do you expect to win out?"

"I hope to, of course."

"You will leave no stone unturned, I suppose?"

"No stone that can be legitimately turned. I shall disturb no other."

"That goes without saying."

"But why your interest in the fight?" Madison asked deliberately, in subdued yet sonorous tones. "I was not aware that you ever dipped into politics beyond casting your vote."

"Well, not often," Nick admitted. "Occasionally, however, I make a play in politics. This happens to be one of the occasions."

There was an indescribably ominous intensity in the steady gaze with which the eyes of these two men were fixed upon each other. Not for an instant did either deviate or waver.

Not for a moment, moreover, was the surrounding silence broken by any sound save their voices. Yet not

once had either been raised above an ordinary pitch, or tinctured any betrayal of their true feelings. Invariable suavity and politeness, rather, seemed to imbue them.

"Why this occasion, Mr. Carter?" Madison questioned. "Why your interest in this particular fight?"

"Because of what befell your opponent this morning," said Nick.

"Befell Mr. Gordon?"

"Yes."

"What was that?"

"He was arrested on suspicion of having murdered a woman last night in a Columbus Avenue flat," said Nick.

Madison heard him without a change of countenance.

"Gordon arrested on such a charge as that? Is it possible?" he replied.

"It is more than possible. It is a fact."

"I have not seen to-day's papers," Madison said indifferently.

"There is no report of it in the papers."

"No?"

"None whatever."

"Why is that?"

"Because I prevented it, Madison, and had Gordon liberated," said Nick. "I knew publicity might ruin his chances of election."

"You are a Gordon man, then."

Madison now spoke with a covert sneer.

"Well, yes, to be perfectly frank with you," bowed Nick. "So I suppressed the newspaper stories, and had Gordon liberated and the accusation killed. That is the little political play I have made. Aside from that, however, I had other reasons for making it."

"What reasons, Carter?"

"I do not believe Gordon committed the crime," said Nick. "I have, in fact, found positive proof that he did not."

"Indeed? Some one, then, must have blundered."

The last vestige of color now had left Madison's face. His strong features were taking on the haggard look of a long illness. Not once did his intense eyes leave those of the detective, however, or his powerful figure relax from its rigid attitude of strained attention.

"Yes, some one blundered," Nick agreed, bowing again. "The blunder is going to prove costly, too, to the persons involved. The victim of the murder, Madison, was a woman named Matilda Lancey."

"Indeed?" Madison's face hardened perceptibly. "I was acquainted with her. We used to be friendly in a way."

"Used to?"

"That is what I said. I have not had her to lunch, or in any other way associated with her, for months."

"Your friendship with her ended, I infer."

"Yes. That's about the size of it."

"Has she approached you in any designing way since the termination of your friendliness?"

"How designing?" Madison demanded, brows drooping. "What do you mean, Carter?"

"I mean with threats of blackmail, or anything of that kind."

"I don't recall that she has."

"You would be likely to remember it, wouldn't you?"

"Certainly," Madison bluntly admitted. "But there is nothing in that. How could she blackmail me?"

"By threatening to publish your compromising letters, Mr. Madison, which you employed crooks to steal from her, and which last night was accomplished, resulting in her death at their hands," Nick now said more sternly.

Madison's teeth met with a snap. He lurched forward in his chair, eyes blazing, and banged his fist upon the desk.

"See here, Carter!" he cried, with a volcanic outbreak of rage. "If you have come here to insult me, or——"

"Oh, don't get excited," Nick interrupted, checking him with a quick, commanding gesture. "There is nothing in that, Madison, and you ought to know it. I will tell you with very few words why I have come here. Hear them like a man, not turn bull in a china shop. You know that neither bluster nor bluff have any effect upon me."

Madison straightened up again and governed his resentment, though it still glowed in his eyes and caused a vicious twitching of his thin lips.

"Out with it, then," he said harshly. "Why are you here, Carter? What do you want?"

"The truth," said Nick shortly.

"About what?"

"The murder of Tilly Lancey."

"I know nothing about it."

"And I know, Madison, that that is a falsehood," Nick said sternly. "I know that she was killed by persons employed by you to commit that crime, or to recover the letters you have written to her. I know who the culprits are, some of them, and within six hours I will have them behind prison bars. One is Cora Cavendish, a disreputable friend of the murdered woman. Another is Mortimer Deland, a notorious English crook. I know so much, Madison, in fact, that unless you confess the whole truth here and now, I will railroad you to the Tombs for safe-keeping until——"

"Stop—stop! You have said enough," Madison interrupted, with a groan. "I will tell you, Carter, I will confess the whole truth. I am in wrong, horribly wrong, but I will tell you all. I will——"

An oath interrupted him—an oath and a blow.

Both came from a man who had stealthily approached the house, peered in through the window, stolen in through the open conservatory, all so noiselessly that he had reached the alcove unheard—and from which he leaped, and, with a single bound, reached the unsuspecting detective.

A blackjack in his uplifted hand fell like a flash, fell squarely on the detective's head, meeting it with a single sickening thud.

And Nick Carter pitched forward and rolled out of his chair, crashing to the floor, as dead to the world as if he had been felled by a thunderbolt.

His assailant was Mortimer Deland.

CHAPTER VIII.

DRIVEN TO THE WALL.

John Madison had sprung to his feet, uttering a cry, vainly attempting to prevent the lightninglike assault. But it had been made so quickly and with such vicious determination that Nick himself had received not the slightest warning of the terrible blow.

"Good heavens! What have you done? You have killed him!" gasped Madison, when the detective fell insensible to the floor.

Deland turned on him like a flash, with features dis-

torted and murder in his eyes. He whipped out a revolver and thrust its muzzle against the lawyer's burly form.

"Sit down!" he cried, with a wolfish snarl. "Sit down, or I'll send you after him. I'm here for business, and you'll find I mean it."

Madison shrank instinctively from the deadly weapon, sinking back on his chair, as ghastly with fear and dismay as if the hand of death already had been laid upon him.

"Sit quiet, now," snarled Deland, still with terrible ferocity. "If you stir, hang you, I'll send a bullet into you."

Madison's only reply was a hopeless groan.

Deland placed his revolver on the chair from which the detective had fallen, face down on the floor, with one arm crooked under his battered head

Crouching beside him, with one eye constantly on the lawyer, Deland drew up Nick's coat and got his revolver, thrusting it into his own pocket. Then, fishing out the detective's handcuffs, he drew Nick's arms behind him and locked the iron around his wrists.

All was accomplished in a very few seconds, and with the brutal energy and determination of one ready to meet opposition with instant bloodshed.

Rising, Deland then dragged Nick a few feet from the desk, to which he then turned, seizing his revolver and taking the chair from which the detective had fallen.

"Killed him, eh?" he now snarled coldly, fixing his glittering eyes on the ghastly face of the lawyer. "It will be a good thing for you, for both of us, if I have killed him. That's the only look in we've got. If I haven't done it, blast him, I'll do it later."

Madison pulled himself together with an effort and straightened up in his chair. He already knew how lawless and desperate a knave confronted him, but his first flush of fear had subsided.

"Don't talk of killing, Deland," he hoarsely protested. "There has been killing enough—more than enough. God knows!"

"And God knows, too, that more may be necessary," Deland returned, with icy austerity.

"Why do you say that? Why necessary?"

"For your own safety and mine," declared Deland, with merciless severity. "That's a clever question to come from you, Madison, after hearing the accusations of this infernal dick."

"But——

"Oh, I know what he has been saying and why he said it. I have been listening outside of the window and in the conservatory. Luckily the outer door was unlocked and that in the alcove open, so that I could get in noiselessly. But for that, Madison, it might have been all over but the shouting—all over for you but paying the price!"

"I shall pay no price for crimes which you——"

"Stop right there!" snapped Deland, jerking his chair nearer the table. "You will pay what I dictate for what has been done."

Madison recoiled involuntarily from the fierce, threatening eyes of the vicious rascal.

"What you dictate——"

"What I dictate—yes!" Deland cut in sternly. "I heard what you finally said to this cursed dick. He had you driven to the wall. You were ready to throw up your hands, to squeal on your pals, to confess the whole business. Do you think I would stand for that? Not much, Madison, not much!"

"But he knows——"

"I don't care what he knows. We must prevent him from making use of it."

"Impossible."

"Wait and see! Twice this cursed Carter has foiled my cleverly laid plans, and twice he has sent me to prison. There shall be no third time—not on your life! I've got it in for him good and hard. I will send him to the devil on greased rollers. I will send you with him, Madison, if you balk against my demands."

"You are quite capable of it, Deland."

"You'll find I am."

"What are your demands?" Madison now asked with a growl, apprehending no immediate violence. "What do you mean by that?"

"You know what I mean."

"On the contrary——"

"You'll put over no lawyer's trick on me," Deland again interrupted. "Cora Cavendish has been out here, hasn't she?"

"Yes. She was here two hours ago."

"Why do you question me, then? She told you what I want."

"You mean, Deland, that she delivered your message?"

"What's the difference? I sent her out here to get the first installment you promised us."

"So she said."

"The situation now has changed, so changed for the worse that I now want all that you promised us," Deland added, with sinister vehemence. "I not only want it, Madison, but I'm going to have it."

"No, Deland, you are not," said Madison, with more firmness than he yet had displayed.

"What's that?"

Deland's jaws closed with an audible snap.

"You heard what I said."

There was a moment or two of silence.

Deland appeared briefly staggered by the altered attitude of the lawyer.

He was not alone, moreover, in hearing that last semi-defiant remark.

Nick Carter was reviving. Inured to hard knocks, his head had sustained much better than either of his companions suspected the blow it had received.

Nick heard the remark, however much as one hears in a dream, or the voice of one at a distance. It began to bring him to himself, nevertheless, and with slowly returning consciousness a realization of his position and of what had occurred.

With these came, too, a more keen appreciation of the entire situation, and the cobwebs then cleared from his brain more rapidly. A definite thought had leaped up in his mind, quickly followed by another and another.

"By Jove, I was knocked out. Madison has another visitor. One of his confederates, one of the gang of crooks, showed up here. It is to him he is talking."

Nick had not stirred—did not stir.

"I'll wait for more," was the thought that followed. "I will hear what is said. It may be Deland himself. I can rely upon Chick and Patsy."

Stretched prostrate on the floor a few feet from the desk, with his face upturned in the full rays from the lamp, Nick had not ventured to lift so much as a corner

of an eyelid, lest the movement of it might be seen and rightly interpreted. He continued motionless and silent, as if still dead to the world, and in another moment the familiar voice of Deland fell upon his ears and convinced him of his assailant's identity.

"Yes, I heard what you said, Madison," he replied, with sudden ominous coldness. "I heard what you said—but you do not mean it."

"On the contrary, Deland, I do mean it," declared the lawyer, more forcibly.

"That you will not settle with me and my pals for what we have done?"

"That is precisely what I mean."

"By Heaven, then, you shall pay the price in another way!" cried Deland, with renewed ferocity. "You shall meet the fate which—ha! they are here, now. We will see—we will see!"

"You'll not be alone in seeing," thought Nick, now comparatively himself again.

A low, peculiar whistle had come from within the conservatory. It brought Deland to his feet on the instant, turning quickly toward the alcove through which he had entered.

Three men now emerged from it, following close on the heels of one another. Though all were well dressed, all were of dark and sinister aspect, with faces that wore the unmistakable stamp of the crook.

Nick seized this opportunity for a momentary glance at them, and he instantly recognized all three as East Side gangsters, as Patsy Garvan had identified them by the names he had heard mentioned by Deland.

"Holy smoke!" exclaimed the foremost, with a glance at the motionless form of the detective. "Is the world coming to an end? How did you get the big dick, Mortie?"

"Plugger Flynn, as bad an egg as was ever laid," thought Nick.

"I had to get him, Plugger, and get him good," said Deland, more coolly. "He had Madison on the run."

"He did, eh?" Flynn glared at the lawyer. "Not going to squeal, was he?"

"That's what."

"Hang him, then. I'll close his trap so he can't squeal, as sure as——"

"You keep your gun in your pocket, Daggett," snapped Deland, when he saw the other reaching for a revolver. "There'll be time enough for that, if it comes to that kind of a play. But we've got him so he'll not squeal, and where he'll be glad to settle. You've arrived just in time."

"We hiked out here on the run after seeing Cora," nodded Flynn.

"She told you——"

"The whole business, Mortie," put in a slender, crafty-looking rascal known as Buck Tobey, chiefly because of his passion for bucking a faro game. "But how did the dick get wise to so much?"

"Don't ask me," said Deland. "How in thunder do I know?"

"Does he know about the red liquor? Does he know it came from the skirt, and that I was the one that sprinkled it on the banker? If he does, by thunder, and that you three ginks croaked——"

"Shut up!" snapped Deland. "It now makes no difference what he knows. We'll fix him so he can make no use of it."

"That's got to be done," Plugger Flynn declared, with a growl.

"And the sooner it's done, Mortie, the better," added Daggett, glaring down at the detective. "It'll be a good job to wipe out this dick. If the rest of his push know too much, we'll croak them, also."

"There'll be time enough for all that," said Deland, with characteristic assurance. "I first will finish with this infernal squealer and find out where he stands."

"He'll settle, by thunder, or we'll stand him on his head," snarled Daggett, jerking a chair toward the desk and sitting down. "Get after him, Deland. You've been doing the talking."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLOSED DOOR.

Nick Carter needed to hear no more than the significant remarks already made, nor really needed to have heard them, in fact, to convince him that his earlier suspicions and deductions, as well as the theory he had formed concerning the terrible crime were almost absolutely correct.

Nick now felt reasonably sure, too, since learning that Cora Cavendish had sent the three crooks out there, that Patsy must have got on her track before that was done, and he was borrowing no trouble as to the outcome of his own situation.

The only point that Nick now wanted to clear up, in fact, was the precise relations that had existed between Madison and this gang of thugs, and he knew that he was in a fair way of doing so.

John Madison had not stirred from the swivel chair in which he was seated. Nor had he spoken, or even changed countenance, during the vicious remarks that had passed between the several crooks. He really appeared indifferent to them, and he now wore the grimly determined aspect of a man who had made up his mind what to do, and had the nerve and stamina to do it.

Deland was quick to observe all this, and his evil eyes had an uglier gleam when he resumed his seat at the desk to continue his talk with the lawyer, while Daggett, Flynn, and Tobey occupied chairs near by.

"Now, Madison, let's get right down to cases," Deland began, whipping out each word with ominous asperity. "I'll say what I mean and you do the same. You are up against one of two things. You're going to settle with us, as you agreed to do, or you're going to be sent up for the murder of Tilly Lancey. There's no middle course for you."

"H'm, I see," thought Nick, already sizing up the situation. "No middle course for him, eh? I'll lay one out for him, then, unless I'm much mistaken."

Madison did not reply for a moment. He drew up his powerful figure a little higher in his chair, and bestowed a frowning glance upon each of the rascals confronting him. His gaze finally settled upon Deland's evil face, however, and remained there.

"I will be sent up for the murder of Tilly Lancey, will I?" he slowly answered.

"That's what you will," Deland nodded. "That's one course."

"How can I be sent up for a crime that you scoundrels committed?"

"We'll swear it onto you, and we have the stuff to fix it so it will stay. I've got the bunch of letters you wrote to her. We'll chuck them in for evidence. We'll frame you up, all right, and in a way that will let us down dead easy. You can bank on that."

"And bank on it good and strong, too," put in Plugger Flynn, pounding the desk top with his fingers.

"You fellows are a fine gang with which to do business," said Madison, with manifest contempt in his deep voice. "Either one of you would double cross his own mother. I ought to have known it in the beginning, but I was caught by the bait you threw me. The only other course is for me to settle, you say?"

"You heard what I said," snapped Deland.

"I'll have my say, now, for a moment," Madison returned. "You approached me a week ago, Deland, with a proposition that in a way appealed to me. You said you could get from Tilly Lancey a number of letters with which she has threatened me, and also that you could do it in such a way as to have it publicly appear that my political opponent, Arthur Gordon, had been trying to buy them and was secretly an intimate friend of that woman."

"Well, come to the point," said Deland. "We admit all that."

"Good enough," thought Nick, calmly taking it all in. "That admission will cost you something, Deland, and may save him. I'll wait and see which way the cat jumps."

"I apprehended defeat in the coming election," Madison went on deliberately. "For that reason, only, your proposition appealed to me. I foresaw that I could, with those letters restored to me and Gordon in a measure defamed, easily carry the election. I asked you what you would accept for doing the job?"

"And you agreed to pay it, ten thousand dollars, and told us to go ahead," said Deland.

"True," Madison darkly nodded. "But I did not agree to bloodshed. You did not tell me that a murder was to be committed. You did not even hint that Tilly Lancey's life was to be taken. Not for a moment, you double-dyed knave, would I have considered that hideous proposition. You said——"

"Never mind what we said," Deland cut in sharply. "We know what we said and to what you agreed. We have our own way of doing things, and we have delivered the goods. It now is up to you to settle. We have put Gordon in wrong. I have your letters in my pocket. You're going to settle, too, or——"

"Stop right there, Deland," Madison interrupted, leaning forward to bang the desk with his fist. "There will be no settlement between you fellows and me. As I told Cora Cavendish two hours ago, you will not get a copper from me."

"We won't, eh?"

Deland's hand went to his hip pocket.

"Not one copper!" Madison thundered. "You say I have only one of two courses. I say, however, that I have a third course, and that's the course I will take. There is only one way for me to settle this infamous business, and that was shown me by this man on the floor. I will confess the truth, take my medicine for what I have done, and accomplish one other thing—that of sending you miscreants to the fate you deserve! That's the way I'll settle with you—and the only way!"

It would be hard to say what might have followed, but for one startling and utterly unexpected incident.

Nick Carter sat straight up on the floor and shouted:

"Good for you, Madison! Stick to that and I'll pull you out! Against any man but Gordon—I'd give you my vote!"

Nick had more than one reason for this sudden outbreak. From where he was lying on the floor, he could see through the alcove and into the dimly lighted conservatory.

He could see Chick Carter and Patsy Garvan crouching there, each with revolvers drawn.

Their timely arrival was not due to anything extraordinary. Patsy had trailed Cora Cavendish to an East Side saloon, and had seen her meet Flynn and give him Deland's instructions. Patsy then had followed Flynn, and later Daggett and Tobey, learning positively in the meantime that they were to join Deland in Madison's residence. Seizing an opportunity to telephone home, also, Patsy found that Chick had returned, and quick arrangements were made to meet on the Madison place. They had done so just in time to see the three crooks enter the conservatory—whither they soon stealthily followed them.

Before Nick's ringing words were fairly uttered, Deland and the three gangsters were on their feet and reaching for their weapons.

"That door!" snapped Deland, pointing to the alcove. "Close and lock it, Daggett. Pull down that curtain, Tobey, down to the sill. Not settle, eh? We'll settle the hash of both, then, before——"

"You're already too late!" Nick shouted.

He would have added a word or two, but they would have been lost in the tumult that then began.

Both Flynn and Daggett had started into the alcove to obey Deland's instructions, and each had been met with a crashing blow from Chick and Patsy, dealt with precision and violence that sent both of them headlong to the floor.

Before either could rise, both detectives were in the room and had them covered, while a third revolver caused Tobey to turn from the window and throw up his hands.

Deland had been the first to realize the actual situation, and like a flash he had darted toward the hall.

Chick saw him as the rascal passed through the door.

"After him, Patsy!" he yelled, with a directing glance. "I can handle these three."

Patsy turned and darted into the hall.

As he came through the doorway, the crash of Deland's revolver drowned all other sounds.

The bullet splintered the door casing over Patsy's head.

Bang!

Another ball whizzed by Patsy's head.

The hall was only dimly lighted by the rays that came from the lamp in the side hall, and for an instant Patsy could not see his quarry. The flash from his revolver on the second shot revealed him.

Deland was darting up the main stairway, not daring to wait to open a door, and evidently bent upon reaching the veranda roof and thence making his escape.

Patsy now saw him plainly, and that he again was about to fire, and he dropped like a flash to his knees. He was not quite quick enough, however.

Bang! went the weapon, and the bullet tore through the flesh on Patsy's left shoulder.

He felt the sting and the gush of hot blood. He was

up on the instant, revolver leveled, and was pumping lead up the stairway with the rapidity of a gatling gun.

The report of the weapon was mingled with another sound—the crash of a body at Patsy's feet.

Deland had pitched sideways over the baluster rail—with four bullets in his breast. He was stone dead before he struck the hall floor.

Patsy Garvan had closed the eternal door on the most vicious crook then at large.

All that remains to be told of the strange and stirring case may be told with few and simple words. The three crooks, and subsequently Cora Cavendish, were arrested, and later received life sentences for complicity in the murder of Tilly Lancey. They made no fight against the evidence Nick Carter had obtained.

It also appeared that the crime had been framed up by Cora and Deland, as Nick had suspected, and that not only they, but also Flynn and Daggett were in the flat when Gordon visited the woman. Nick's suspicions and deductions had, in fact, been correct from the start.

John Madison confessed his part in the affair to the court, and Nick's intervention in his behalf resulted in his discharge from custody. He was ignominiously defeated in the election, however, and he moved West with his family the following month.

Arthur Gordon was elected with flying colors, and—well, it would be vain to attempt to describe his gratitude for Nick Carter and his assistants. There are sentiments that language cannot express.

Mortimer Deland was buried, his true name and history with him, save his criminal history, on the day after he was shot.

THE END.

"A Human Counterfeit; or, Nick Carter and the Crook's Double," will be the title of the long, complete story you will find in the next issue, No. 157, of the NICK CARTER STORIES, out September 11th. There is an unusually baffling mystery in this story that requires all of the cleverness of the great detective to solve. You will also find the usual installment of the serial now running, together with several other interesting articles.

THE DULL BOY SCORED.

"Now, my sharp lads!" exclaimed the schoolmaster, "answer me this little riddle and there's a holiday for the one who does it: Supposing a gentle little donkey was tied to a tree with a rope eight yards long, and a truss of hay was inviting his appetite at a distance of nine yards, how could he get at it without breaking or gnawing the rope?"

The hay, the donkey, and the difficulty were mentally seen, but not the answer to the ancient conundrum.

"All give it up?" asked the master.

"Yes, sir," was answered in a chorus of disappointment.

Then the schoolmaster, naturally, exclaimed:

"So did the other little donkey, my lads."

"Please, sir, the other day you said I was a dull boy, but may I answer?" asked a very little fellow, with a sly look.

"Certainly, Arthur; but you must be quick," decided the man of knowledge.

"Well, then, sir," the juvenile declared, "when he'd gone eight yards, he'd be sure to reach the hay by keeping on four feet, and he'd have a foot over as well as his nose."

Then the master bent over his desk without a leg to stand on.

SNAPSHOT ARTILLERY.

By BERTRAM LEBHAR.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 153 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XII.

THE FRAME-UP.

During the two hours in which Hawley had been confined in a cell at police headquarters, waiting to be taken to court, Gale had suggested to Chief of Police Hodgins that it would be a good plan to take the prisoner's camera to a professional photographer and have the film developed so as to make the case against the Camera Chap as complete as possible.

The chief had agreed that this would be a wise precaution. He had a friend who ran a portrait studio a few doors from police headquarters, and he and Gale proceeded to this place.

Without the slightest suspicion as to its contents, they handed Hawley's camera to the photographer and accompanied him into his dark room so as to be able to swear conscientiously in court, later on, that they had been present when the film was taken out and developed, and could positively identify it.

Great was their astonishment when the camera was opened and out popped a jack-in-the-box, with its fingers derisively extending from its nose.

In addition to the cheap film camera—the one which Chief Hodgins now held as evidence—the Camera Chap had also purchased a toy which is to be found in every toy shop in the world.

This article comes in all sizes. The jack-in-the-box which Hawley selected was small, and fitted snugly inside the cheap film camera after the roll of film had been removed.

Before leaving the store, Hawley had taken out his pocketknife and removed the lid of the jack-in-the-box. Then he stuffed the rest of the toy inside the camera, compressing the spring so that when the little trapdoor in the camera was opened Jack would immediately pop out in a startling manner.

By the light of the photographer's ruby lamp, Hodgins and Gale exchanged glances of blank dismay.

For a few moments the chief's emotion was so profound that he was quite incapable of speech. He stood scowling at the papier-mâché figure, and from his throat came strange noises as though he were about to have a fit.

"It looks as if we've been handed a nice, juicy lemon," exclaimed Gale, with a grim laugh. "There's no film there, of course."

"Not a bit of film," replied the photographer to whom this question was addressed. "This funny little jumping jack occupies all the space where the film roll should go."

Gale turned regretfully to Hodgins. "Guess we don't

get Hawley this time, chief. I understand now why that stiff was so amused over his arrest. He didn't expect that we'd open the camera before we got to court, and he figured on making us look like a couple of fools there."

What Chief Hodgins said in response cannot be printed here. He had recovered his power of speech by this time, and proceeded to make good use—or, rather, bad use—of it.

"Well, at all events," said Gale soothingly, "you're lucky to have discovered this miserable trick here and now, instead of later on in court. You have at least saved your dignity, chief."

"Dignity my eye!" growled Hodgins, refusing to find any comfort in this reflection. "I wanted that impudent loafer in jail—I'd almost give my right hand to be able to put him there—and this is a terrible disappointment. Honest, young feller, it's enough to make a man feel discouraged."

Then it was that Gale had an inspiration. Taking Hawley's camera from the table, he hurried out of the studio, signaling to Hodgins to follow him.

When they reached the sidewalk, Gale explained his plan, and the chief slapped him on the back approvingly.

"You're all right, young feller," he declared warmly. "I see you've got nerve as well as brains. Under ordinary circumstances, of course, I don't approve of frame-ups. Honesty's the best policy—that's my motto. But these ain't ordinary circumstances. That darned Camera Chap is a menace to society. It would be a real calamity to have him at large. Consequently it is my duty to the public to keep him behind bars; and when duty calls upon Bill Hodgins, he don't stop at nothin'. So go ahead, young feller, and carry out this idea of yours."

Gale's plan, it is perhaps unnecessary to explain, was to manufacture the evidence necessary to convict the Camera Chap. With this object in view, he visited a dealer in photographic supplies and had Hawley's camera loaded with film.

Then he proceeded to the city hall and took a snapshot of that edifice, taking care to stand in exactly the same spot which the Camera Chap had occupied.

When the film was developed, Hodgins and Gale had taken their prisoner to court, both of them highly elated by the thought of the surprise they were going to spring on Hawley.

As soon as the film was offered in evidence, the Camera Chap guessed at once what had been done; but he realized that it would be futile to try to make the judge believe that he was the victim of a frame-up. He foresaw that his story would be received with derision, and he looked upon himself as lost.

Judge Wall glanced at the negative which Hodgins had handed to him, and smiled approvingly at that official.

"I must compliment you, chief, upon the thoroughness with which you have prepared this case," he said. "The evidence which you have offered leaves no possible doubt in the court's mind as to the guilt of the defendant."

Then his face grew stern as he turned to the Camera Chap. In his most impressive tone he proceeded to deliver a little speech to that young man. His honor greatly prided himself upon his ability as an orator, and he had no intention of missing this rare opportunity to display eloquence before an audience which included the mayor and several of the prominent officials of the city government. Besides, he saw two reporters—one from the *Chronicle* and one from the *Bulletin*—busily making notes, and he realized that his words were about to be handed down to posterity.

"The city of Oldham," he began, "has good cause to congratulate itself upon the wisdom of its city fathers—as that body of public-spirited men who comprise the city council has been affectionately nicknamed. Never has that wisdom been more strikingly manifested than by the framing of the recent ordinance regulating the use of cameras upon our public highways and within our public buildings."

The magistrate paused long enough to enable the reporters to catch up with him. Then he went on:

"Like the sword, the revolver, and other deadly weapons, the camera is an instrument of both good and evil. In the hands of decent men it is a blessing to humanity. In the hands of the vicious it is a menace to society."

As the magistrate uttered these words, Chief Hodgins was so stirred that he clapped his hands applaudingly, and had to be reminded by his honor that such conduct was unseemly in a courtroom.

"It is possible that the city of Oldham—always progressive—is the first city in the United States to enact legislation controlling the use of the camera," the magistrate continued. "But it can safely be predicted that other cities will soon follow our example. They will realize that if it is proper to require licenses for dogs, firearms, automobiles, and alcohol, there is every reason why cameras should be licensed, too. For the camera is quite as dangerous as a revolver or a mad dog—when it is used by such reckless rascals as the prisoner at the bar."

Once more Chief Hodgins started to applaud, but managed to control himself just in time to escape another reprimand.

"Your guilt has been fully established," said his honor to the Camera Chap. "You are the first offender to be brought up for trial under the new law, and I am going to make an example of you. I am going to give you the maximum penalty, to serve as a warning to others of your ilk."

The magistrate was just about to pass sentence, when the mayor, in a whisper, reminded him that he had not yet given the prisoner a chance to say anything in his defense. The mayor had no desire to befriend the Camera Chap, but he wished the proceedings to be quite regular.

Somewhat crestfallen at his blunder, Judge Wall turned to Hawley with a scowl.

"Is there anything you wish to say before I pass sentence, young man?" he snapped.

Hawley felt so sure that it would be useless for him to declare that the evidence against him had been manufactured, that he was about to shake his head in negation, when it occurred to him to ask to be allowed to examine the film negative which his honor still held in his hand.

Although the chance was slim, he was in hopes that he might be able to detect something on this exhibit which would enable him to prove that he had not taken the snapshot.

The court had no objection to the defendant's examining the negative, and the strip of film was handed to the Camera Chap.

As he held it up to the light and scrutinized it in-

tently, the gaze of Gale and Chief Hodgins was fixed searchingly upon his face. It was rather an anxious moment for them.

But sneers curled their lips as they observed the baffled expression which came to Hawley's countenance. It was quite evident that he had found nothing which would enable him to prove that he was the victim of a frame-up.

The Camera Chap was just about to hand back the film to the court officer and prepare to take his medicine, when suddenly Hodgins and Gale saw him start violently. Then once more he held the negative up to the light, and, with sudden apprehension, they observed the grim look on his face give way to a broad grin.

"Your honor," the Camera Chap cried excitedly, "you ask if I have anything to say before you pass sentence upon me. I have a few words to say now. I wish to point out to your honor that it was two p. m. when I was placed under arrest, and a quarter past two when I arrived at police headquarters and was locked in a cell. The police blotter will prove that."

"The chief of police has testified as to the time of your arrest," said the magistrate testily. "It was two p. m., as you say. But what has that to do with the case? I don't see the significance of that fact."

The Camera Chap's grin broadened. "I think your honor will see the significance when I point out that this photograph was taken at three p. m., and, consequently, could not have been taken by me."

"What nonsense is this?" his honor snapped. "It will do you no good to trifle with the court, young man."

"I am not trifling with the court," Hawley replied. "There can't be any question about the time this snapshot was taken, your honor. If you will hold the negative up to the light, as I have done, you will see plainly that the hands of the clock in the tower of the city hall are pointing to three o'clock. Evidently the gentlemen responsible for this frame-up overlooked that small detail. If they had thought of it, it would have been easy for them to have touched up the negative a bit so as to have spoiled the face of that clock."

The faces of Gale and Chief Hodgins had turned quite pale. Their pallor increased when Judge Wall examined the negative, and, in a tone of great astonishment, confirmed the defendant's statement.

"The hands of the clock in this picture certainly are pointing to three o'clock," his honor declared. "What does it mean, chief?"

"The clock must have been fast," suggested Hodgins, in an agitated tone.

The judge glanced out of the courtroom window, from which the white clock tower of the city hall was visible. Then he consulted his watch, and the timepiece on the wall of the courtroom.

"The city-hall clock is not fast—it is exactly right!" he declared sharply. "Moreover, I have never heard of that clock being wrong. I don't believe it has gained or lost a minute in ten years. I can't understand this thing at all, chief."

Judge Wall was a friend of Chief Hodgins and the other members of the political ring which the *Bulletin* was fighting. He was willing to do a lot to accommodate these men, but he emphatically drew the line at sending an innocent man to jail.

Therefore, when he had heard the Camera Chap's story, he turned to Hodgins with a frown. "I am afraid I shall have to throw this case out of court, chief," he said. "There are several things about it which I don't understand; but, in view of these—ahem—surprising developments, I am convinced that there is not sufficient evidence to justify me in convicting this young man. The prisoner is discharged."

CHAPTER XIII.

GUERRILLA WARFARE.

"I suppose you are going to get after those fellows now and send them both to jail for conspiracy," said Fred Carroll to Hawley, as he sat chatting in the *Bulletin* office half an hour after the Camera Chap's triumphant departure from the police court. "You've certainly a strong case against them."

"Oh, no! I shan't bother," Hawley replied. "I think their disappointment is punishment enough for them. I had the last laugh, and I'm quite satisfied. As far as I'm concerned, the case is closed. Of course, though, it's possible that the magistrate may deem it his duty to take up the matter on his own hook."

"There's not much chance of that," said Carroll, with a laugh. "Wall and Hodgins are good friends. I guess the judge will be only too glad to let the matter drop, if you don't press it.

"And I'm mighty glad to hear you say you don't intend to do so, old man," the proprietor of the *Bulletin* declared. "On Melba's account, I mean. She hasn't much use for her cousin; but still, she'd be greatly distressed, I guess, if he were sent to jail. She's a very sensitive girl, and no doubt would feel the disgrace keenly."

"If I had any desire to prosecute those fellows—which I haven't—that argument would be quite sufficient to stop me," the Camera Chap declared. "I wouldn't for worlds do anything to distress Miss Gale. She's one of the nicest girls I've ever met. You are, indeed, to be congratulated, Fred."

"Who? Me?" exclaimed Carroll, making a clumsy attempt to appear bewildered. 'What the dickens are you talking about, Frank?"

Hawley laughed. "Say, do you think I'm blind? Don't you suppose I got wise to the situation as soon as I saw you two together to-day? You might as well 'fess up, old scout."

"I suppose I might as well," the other answered, grinning sheepishly. "Yes, Frank, you've hit it right—though how the deuce you guessed it, you infernal old wizard, I can't imagine—Melba and I are secretly engaged. She's the finest girl in the world, and——"

"Why secretly engaged?" the Camera Chap broke in hastily. He had had experience with fellows in love before, and he knew that once they get to talking about the fair one's charms it is mighty hard to get them to stop.

"I should think you'd be glad to proclaim your engagement to all the world," he added. "Why on earth are you keeping it a secret?"

"Because Melba insists upon it," Carroll explained. "You see, poor little girl, she's an orphan, and her uncle and cousin are the only kin she has. She doesn't want to be turned out of her uncle's home, and she has an idea that that's what would happen if the fact of our engagement were to become known to that old fox."

Hawley nodded. "I see. Does the uncle know that you are even on speaking terms with her?"

"Oh, yes! He is aware that we are acquainted. I used to call on her at the house when I first came to Oldham, until he made it quite clear to me that my presence there was not desired—by him."

"And since then, you have kept away?" chuckled Hawley.

"Sure! I didn't want to embarrass Melba. Of course, we have been meeting frequently outside right along; but I don't think the old man has any suspicion of that."

"Well, why don't you elope with the girl?" the Camera Chap suggested. "It seems to me that, under the circumstances, that's the only thing to do. If I were in your place, Fred, I'd have married her long ago."

Carroll frowned. "You're talking like an idiot," he declared indignantly. "How can I get married when I haven't a cent to my name? As I told you the other day, the *Bulletin* isn't making enough money to support even me alone. If I married Melba in my present circumstances I'd deserve to be sent to State's prison—or a lunatic asylum."

"Well, what's the matter with giving up the *Bulletin* and going back to Park Row?" the Camera Chap suggested, watching his friend's face narrowly. "As a reporter, you could at least make enough to support a wife."

To Hawley's great joy, a grim, fighting look came to Carroll's face at these words.

"Give up the *Bulletin!*" he exclaimed tensely. "Not while there's a breath of life left in the old sheet. I'm no quitter, Frank. I thought you knew me better than that. Those fellows have got me groggy, I must admit; but they haven't got me quite down and out yet. When that happens, I may go back to Park Row and hunt a job as a reporter, but not before.

"And even if I wanted to quit," he went on, with a whimsical smile, "I couldn't do it. Melba wouldn't hear of it. She's thoroughly in sympathy with the policy of the *Bulletin*, and she wouldn't have much use for me if I were to give up the fight."

The Camera Chap grabbed his friend's hand impulsively. "Old man," he cried, "I'm tickled to death to hear you talk like that—although it's only what I expected, of course.

"Tell me, Mr. Editor," he went on eagerly, "could you use some snapshots on your front page every issue—good, live snapshots taken on the streets of Oldham? It seems to me that they would brighten up the sheet and help circulation."

"Of course they would," Carroll declared regarding Hawley with astonishment. "I'd be mighty glad to have them. But where could I get them?"

The Camera Chap made a mock obeisance. "I should feel highly honored, sir, if you would appoint me staff photographer of the Oldham *Bulletin*. The position would be only temporary, of course, and the salary would be nothing."

"You!" exclaimed Carroll, with an incredulous laugh. "You don't mean to say that, after the narrow escape you've just had, you'd be rash enough to attempt to take any more pictures on the streets of this town?"

"Appoint me as your staff photographer" said the Camera Chap earnestly, "and I'll undertake to supply you with at least one good snapshot for every issue."

"Taken on the streets of Oldham?"

"Yes—in most cases," Hawley replied.

Carroll stared at him in astonishment. "What's the idea, Frank?" he asked. "How an earth do you expect to get away with it?"

The Camera Chap chuckled. "Guerrilla warfare, old man," he said. "It'll be the rarest sport I've ever had. Guerrilla warfare with a camera."

CHAPTER XIV.

A MAD UNDERTAKING.

The Camera Chap watched the puzzled face of the *Bulletin's* editor as the latter pondered on his rash proposal. "Do I get the job, Fred?" he inquired eagerly. "May I consider myself a regular staff photographer of the Oldham *Daily Bulletin?*"

"You may not," Carroll replied emphatically. "You reckless Indian!" he added, with a laugh. "Do you think for a minute that I'm going to listen to such a proposition? This stunt that you propose is the wildest idea that has ever taken shape in that harum-scarum brain of yours. If I thought that you were tired of liberty and had a feverish longing to spend the next six months in jail, I might be willing to consider your offer. But I have no reason to believe that such is the case."

Hawley grinned. "I have no desire to go to prison, and no intention of going there if I can possibly keep out," he declared. "But really I don't see any reason why the venture should have such a disastrous result."

"You don't, eh?" rejoined Carroll with an ironical laugh. "I suppose if that chair you are sitting on were a keg of dynamite, you'd see no particular danger in drumming your heels against its sides. Do you suppose you could go out taking snapshots on the highways of Oldham in defiance of the new anticamera law, and keep out of the clutches of the police? You might possibly get away with the first picture, although even that is doubtful; but you'd surely be nabbed on your second attempt."

"Why are you so sure of that?" Hadley inquired.

"Why am I sure of it? Why am I sure that a man who couldn't swim would drown if he were to jump overboard from the hurricane deck of a liner in mid-Atlantic on a dark night? Because, my reckless young friend, my common sense enables me to foresee clearly what would happen in both cases. Our friend, Chief Hodgins, would stay awake night and day in order to take advantage of such a grand opportunity to get even with you. Every policeman of the Oldham force would have instructions to bring you in, alive or dead. My esteemed contemporary, the *Chronicle*, would publish a full description of you, refer to you as 'the camera bandit,' and appeal to all good citizens to aid in your capture. The whole city of Oldham would be on the watch for you. What chance would you have?"

A sparkle came to the eyes of the Camera Chap. "By Jove, Fred, that's an alluring picture you've painted!" he exclaimed, with great enthusiasm.

"Alluring?" repeated the other deprecatingly.

"Yes. I hadn't figured that it would be quite as exciting as all that. But I have no doubt the conditions

will be just as you've pictured them, and I can see that I'm going to have even more fun than I expected."

"Fun! Do you mean to say that you could get any fun out of a situation of that sort?"

"Why, of course," Hawley replied simply. "Think of the sport of taking snapshots in the face of such difficulties! Think of the fun of dodging those fellows! The greater the danger, you know, Fred, the more fascination there is to the picture game. There's nothing in taking snapshots which require no risk."

To some men who did not know Frank Hawley, these words might have sounded suspiciously like bombast; but Carroll knew well that the New York *Sentinel's* star camera man was no braggart, and that what he had just said simply and truly expressed his viewpoint regarding "the picture game."

"But, apart from the good time I shall have, think what a great thing this snapshot campaign of mine will be for the *Bulletin*," the Camera Chap continued earnestly. "I predict a big boom in your paper's circulation, Fred, as soon as I get started. The more I'm denounced by the police and the *Chronicle*, the more eager people will be to see the pictures taken by 'the desperate camera bandit.' *Bulletins* will sell like hot cakes, Fred, and your coffers will be full of real money. For Miss Melba's sake, as well as your own, you've got to accept my proposition."

In spite of himself, a wistful expression came to Carroll's face He realized the truth of what Hawley said. He had every reason to believe that snapshots taken under such conditions and published daily on the front page of the *Bulletin* would greatly increase the sale of that paper.

He had been furnished a striking proof of this a few days earlier. when he had published those snapshots showing Chief of Police Hodgins asleep at his desk. There had been a big rise in circulation that day. Papers had sold as fast as the newsboys could hand them out. Everybody in Oldham had appreciated the joke on the fat chief of police and rushed to procure copies of those amusing pictures. And the very next day the sale of the *Bulletin* had fallen off, showing Carroll conclusively that it was Hawley's snapshots alone which had brought about that sudden and all too transient wave of prosperity.

Therefore the proprietor of the *Bulletin* was sorely tempted now by the Camera Chap's offer; but, putting his own interests aside, he shook his head in emphatic negation.

"I admit that it might help our circulation along, old man," he began; "but you see——"

"It would probably bring you a lot of advertising, too," Hawley broke in. "Really, Fred, I shouldn't be at all surprised if this camera campaign resulted in a bunch of nice, fat advertising contracts for the *Bulletin*."

"I doubt that," said Carroll. "It is true that increased advertising generally follows increased circulation; but it wouldn't in my case. As I told you the other day, most of the big advertisers of this town are connected in some way or other with that bunch of grafters the *Bulletin* is fighting, and they wouldn't advertise in our columns no matter what figures our circulation books might show."

"Maybe they wouldn't," the Camera Chap rejoined; "but there are lots of others who would. I wasn't thinking about the local advertisers. I have in mind the big concerns—the breakfast-food people, the purveyors of potted ham, canned soups, cocoa, and mixed pickles; the manufacturers of safety razors, automobiles, shaving soaps, ready-made clothing, et cetera. That's the kind of advertising we'll get for your sheet, Fred."

Carroll laughed grimly. "Don't you suppose I've been after all those people already? There's nothing doing with any of them. I've called personally on those whose advertising offices are in near-by cities, and spent a small fortune in postage stamps corresponding with the rest. Not one of them could be made to see that it would be to his advantage to advertise in the Oldham *Bulletin*."

"Of course not," exclaimed Hawley; "not while your circulation is as low as it is at present. Naturally, they've no desire to throw their money away. But wait until we've boosted the *Bulletin's* circulation sky-high. Then we can talk contracts to them, and I'll wager they'll be ready enough to listen.

"So, you see, Fred," he added laughingly, "you really can't afford to turn down my application for the position of staff photographer on your esteemed paper."

CHAPTER XV.

A DETERMINED STAND.

"Nevertheless, I'm going to turn it down," Carroll declared firmly. "I won't hear of your doing this thing. I'm not going to have it on my conscience that I was the cause of your being sent to jail. It's no use arguing with me, old man; I positively refuse to let you run this risk on my account."

"Very well," said the Camera Chap quietly. "Of course, I have no desire to press my services on you if you don't want them. But I shall go ahead with this camera campaign, just the same. The pictures will make an interesting addition to my scrapbook."

"You crazy Indian! Surely you don't mean that?"

"I certainly do. If you think I'm going to miss all this fun just because you won't give me a job on your paper, you're very much mistaken. Of course, I should greatly prefer to have the snapshots published in the *Bulletin*. I really think that they'll be worth publishing. But since you can't see it that way, I suppose I'll have to be satisfied with adding them to my private collection."

Carroll glanced searchingly at his friend's face and was convinced of his earnestness. Then, with a laugh, he extended his big hand.

"You win, old fellow," he said. "Since you're determined to go ahead anyway, I'd be all kinds of a fool if I were to fail to take advantage of this opportunity. The chances are about a million to one that you'll be nabbed and thrown into jail on your first attempt; but if by a miracle you should succeed in getting any pictures, I'll be tickled to death to use them in the *Bulletin*."

"Good boy!" exclaimed Hawley joyously. "That'll be much more satisfactory to me than pasting them in my scrapbook. And now that I'm a full-fledged member of your staff, Fred—beg pardon; I should say boss—have you any instructions for me? Any particular picture assignment you wish me to go out and cover?"

"Oh, no; I shall not give you any assignments. I'll leave it entirely to you to select your own subjects. Anything will do. No matter what the snapshots may be—

even if it's only a picture of an electric-light pole—the extraordinary circumstances will make it of sufficient value to be worth a place on our front page."

"Very good," said Hawley; "I am inclined to agree with you that it will be the best policy to give me a free hand. But I assure you," he added, with a chuckle, "I have no intention of snapshotting such uninteresting subjects as electric-light poles. The kind of pictures I intend to go after will have a little more life to them than that. In fact, I have an idea now for a group of snapshots which I think would be of great interest to the *Bulletin's* readers. If I can put it across, I think it will make even more of a hit than those pictures of the sleeping police chief."

"What's the idea?" Carroll inquired, with a little more eagerness than he was desirous of manifesting.

The Camera Chap drew his chair nearer, and lowered his voice almost to a whisper: "Do you remember, Fred, that stunt the *Sentinel* pulled off several years ago, when we were roasting the New York police department? I mean those automobiles filled with reporters which the *Sentinel* sent out one night to tour the entire city and count the number of cops who were loafing instead of patrolling their beats?"

"Do I remember it!" exclaimed Carroll, with a reminiscent chuckle. "I should say I do! It was just after I joined the *Sentinel* staff. I was one of the reporters assigned to the story. I shall never forget that automobile ride. We rode a hundred blocks, and in all that distance only encountered one policeman who was conscientiously attending to business. The exposé the *Sentinel* published the next day created a whopping big scandal, and resulted in the biggest shake-up in the history of the New York police department."

"That's right," said Hawley. "Well, what's the matter, Fred, with pulling off something on those lines right here in Oldham? I've got a hunch that this city isn't being patrolled any too well during the night hours. With a lazy, incompetent fathead like Hodgins at the head of the force, it's a pretty safe guess that there isn't much discipline among the rank and file. A tour of the city by night probably would reveal some interesting facts about the Oldham police department."

Carroll nodded vigorously. "You bet it would. You are quite right in supposing that the cops of this burg are a pretty punk lot. The great majority of them got their appointments to the force by political pull, and—well, as you can readily imagine, they're not by any means the best material that could have been found for the job. Yes, your suggestion is a mighty good one, Hawley, old man. I deserve to be kicked for not having thought of it myself long ago. An exposé of that sort ought to sell a lot of *Bulletins*."

"Sure it would!" declared the Camera Chap enthusiastically. "I'm glad you approve. Thought you'd look at it in that light. Guess there's no sense in wasting any time," he added. "I might as well get busy this very night."

The proprietor of the *Bulletin* looked at him in astonishment. "You get busy? Why, what is there for you to do, old man! This'll be a reporter's task. Pictures, of course, will be quite out of the question."

"Oh, will they, though?" chuckled Hawley. "I don't agree with you there. The pictures will be the main feature of this exposé. Of course, we'll have a story, too—a couple of columns or so of reading matter to go with the snapshots—but, with all modesty, I think I can say that it will be my camera which will give the people of Oldham the most graphic idea of what the police force is doing while the town slumbers."

"Nonsense!" Carroll expostulated. "This will be at night. How can you take pictures——"

"How can I?" Hawley interrupted. "What a peculiar question! Surely, my dear Fred, you must be forgetting all about the existence of a certain compound called magnesium powder."

"What!" cried Carroll, almost rising in his chair. "Man alive! You don't mean to say you'd be insane enough to attempt to take snapshots on the streets of Oldham by flash light?"

The Camera Chap grinned at his friend's display of horrified amazement.

"Oh, yes, I'll have to use that flash-light powder, of course," he answered. "I don't know of any other way of taking pictures at night; and we positively must have those snapshots."

TO BE CONTINUED.

HOW HE PAID HIS PASSAGE.

W. BERT FOSTER.

"Come, now, hustle out o' here!"

"I ain't doin' any harm."

"You git out, I say, an' don't ye talk back to me!"

"Please, mister——"

"Git!"

Big Bill Bronson, the dock watchman, raised his heavy hand threateningly, and the forlorn little chap, whom he had addressed in such rough tones, climbed painfully out of the box of straw in which he had taken refuge, as he hoped, for the night.

"We don't want no young wharf rats like you round here," Big Bill declared. "So, git along with you!"

It was still early in the evening. Perhaps if Terry Carson had waited until it had grown darker he might have ensconced himself in the box unobserved, and spent the night in comparative comfort. But he had been so tired that he had risked seeking his "lodging" early, with the above result.

For days he had tramped the streets of the seaport town, looking for a job. But nobody seemed to want him, or his services. The past fortnight had been a terrible experience to young Terry.

"I warn't goin' for to do any harm, sir," he said, having gotten out of the box of straw.

"I dunno whether you was or not," growled Bill. "There's too many of the like o' you 'round. Come, move on, or I'll hand ye over to the cop!"

At this threat, Terry had to give up all hope of his lodging, and moved painfully away.

"I just hate this town!" he muttered. "There ain't no place in it for me. I wish I could get away from it, so I do."

His eyes wandered across the broad docks to the shipping beyond—tall-masted, deep-sea vessels all.

"I wish I could get aboard one o' them boats an' just sail away from this mean old place."

It was not too dark yet to reveal the decks pretty

clearly. The fading light revealed Terry's sturdy figure, too. He was a strong, well-built chap of fifteen.

"Jiminy crickets! I b'lieve I'll try it!" he muttered, after an instant's silent scrutiny of the individual on the quarter of the nearest craft; and then, despite the fact that big Bill, the watchman, shouted after him, he turned away from the great gate, which was the only entrance by land to the dock, and marched up the narrow gangplank to the vessel's deck.

Captain Josh Carlton, who was pacing the deck with a huge cigar between his teeth, suddenly became conscious of the presence of somebody beside himself upon the quarter, by a shrill voice, which piped out:

"Mister, I say!"

"Who the dickens are you?" demanded the captain in surprise, gazing down upon young Terry from his height of six foot four.

"Terrence Carson."

"Well, you little sawed-off, what d'ye want here?"

Terry drew himself up to his full height. His "stubbedness" was the tender point.

"I want to ship," he declared.

"You want to ship! Haw, haw, haw!"

Captain Carlton fairly shook with laughter.

"Why, your head hardly reaches the rail," he said; taking the boy by the arm and twisting him about with his face to the shore. "Now, sonny, that's the way ashore. You git!"

Poor Terry, urged by the captain's vigorous shove, walked slowly back to the wharf, and thence to the street. Once outside the gate, he stamped his ill-shod foot determinedly upon the rough pavement.

"I just will do it!" he declared. "They can't keep me off their old vessel, however hard they try. I'm going to sea in the *Calypso*, I am!"

Thus it happened that, half an hour later, when Captain Carlton left the *Calypso* and went uptown to look over the men whom the shipping agent had gotten together for him, leaving the vessel in sole charge of the steward, a ragged figure, sneaking along beside the piled-up cases on the dock, darted across the gangplank and onto the *Calypso's* deck.

Neither the steward nor Bill Bronson, the burly dock watchman, saw him, for they were conversing very earnestly together forward. Terry was totally unfamiliar with a ship, having always lived back in the country; so he made the mistake of entering the cabin for concealment.

It was a nicely furnished apartment, for Captain Carlton was quite a fastidious man, and at one end a heavy curtain hung before a small lavatory. Behind this curtain Terry darted. He had heard Bill say that the *Calypso* would sail early the next morning, and he believed that once the vessel got out of the harbor, she would not be put about for the sake of landing him again.

Hardly had he ensconced himself behind this drapery, when he detected the sound of a footstep softly descending the companion stairs. A moment later, the steward, a low-browed, snaky-looking Italian, appeared. It struck Terry at once that the man's manner seemed odd. He appeared to be fearful of the presence of some unknown person, and glanced apprehensively around him as he stepped into the center of the room under the swinging lamp.

And what followed made the boy's suspicions a surety. The Italian had not entered the cabin during the absence of the captain and officers for any legitimate purpose.

Assuring himself, as he supposed, that he was unobserved, the steward crept softly from door to door, and, opening each, peered into the several staterooms for the purpose of seeing if any were by chance occupied. Confident that this was not the case, he went back to the foot of the companionway and whistled shrilly.

Evidently this was a signal, for at once a heavy step crossed the deck and descended to the cabin. Terry, round-eyed with bewilderment at these proceedings, peered out from behind the curtains and discovered that the newcomer was none other than the watchman, Bill Bronson.

"Eet ees alla quiet, Bill," the steward declared, reassuringly, as big Bill glanced suspiciously about. "Not a soula here. We ees alla right."

Bill growled in reply, and stepped at once to the center of the room, shoving aside a heavy chart table which stood there. Beneath the table was a square of matting which seemed but lightly tacked down, for with one twitch the watchman ripped it off the floor, revealing a trapdoor beneath.

"Dere she ees, Bill," exclaimed the Italian exultantly.

He stooped and raised the trap hastily. The burly watchman squeezed himself into the hole with much grunting and profanity, and, having gotten his head below the level of the floor, began at once to hand out packages, each wrapped carefully in black enamel cloth.

"Work quick, Tonio. No tellin' when them fellers'll git back. The boat's right under the quarter."

The steward's reply was to gather several packages in his arms and hastily ascend to the deck.

Terry, meanwhile, had been doing what he called "some tall thinking." He knew that something remarkably shady was in progress. He could not guess what was in the packages, but that it was something valuable he did not doubt. The treacherous steward and watchman were robbing the *Calypso's* commander, or her owners.

Quick as a flash, when Antonio had disappeared, Terry darted out from behind the curtain and slammed down the trapdoor, shooting the strong bolt at once into place, thus securing the trap firmly. Big Bill was a prisoner.

The muffled sounds of the watchman's voice could not reach the deck, but Terry reached it almost at a single bound. Antonio's figure was faintly visible as he leaned over the rail, tugging at the painter of the small boat, which had become fouled. The packages had been laid on the deck while he was thus engaged.

Terry's mind worked quickly, and the moment his feet touched the deck he saw his chance for overcoming the second river pirate. He lowered his head and charged across the deck like a bolt from a cannon.

His head caught Antonio just below the waistband, and, although the shock well-nigh dislocated his neck and sent him flat upon the deck, it also drove the light body of the astonished steward flying overboard, where he landed, frog fashion, in the dirty dock water.

He might have come back and easily overpowered the boy and released his companion, but Antonio didn't know that. Never for an instant doubting that the gigantic Captain Carlton had returned unexpectedly and kicked

him overboard, the steward swam hastily to a neighboring pier and made good his escape.

Not so big Bill, however. Captain Carlton and his two officers found him, almost suffocated, in the secret compartment, while a greatly demoralized boy stood guard above with a boathook almost as heavy as himself.

When Bill had been pulled out of his prison and marched off under a guard of two blue-coated policemen to a much safer place of durance, Captain Carlton turned to young Terry.

"Well, Shorty," he said jovially, placing his big hands upon the boy's shoulders, "so you're the lad who wanted to ship as an A. B., eh? Got over it?"

"No, sir. I came down here intending to hide away till after you had sailed. I want to get away from this town, so I do."

"And you shall. You've saved the owners a pretty penny," he added, touching the packages strewn about the floor, with his foot; "and I reckon they won't begrudge you your passage. I guess he's paid his fare, sure enough, ain't he, boys?"

And the two inferior officers agreed warmly. However, before that first trip was over, Terry had made himself so useful to the *Calypso's* commander, that he made many more on the same vessel. In fact, he is still with the good ship, and is probably one of the youngest second mates sailing out of the port of Rivermouth.

WHAT PUNISHMENT BY THE KNOUT MEANS.

We read of crimes and cruelties perpetrated in days long, long gone by, and, with a pitying sigh for the wretched sufferers, we thank Heaven that the blessed light of civilization illuminates the nineteenth century. We do not realize that a government, so-called Christian, even to this day, can wantonly cause such heart-rending sufferings as Russia metes out to Poland.

To be exempt from corporal chastisement is one of the privileges of a Russian nobleman; yet this does not prevent the torture being applied to Polish political prisoners even when they are of noble blood.

The subject, albeit a sad one, is not without a certain interest, particularly when we recall the memory of brave men and braver women who have yielded up a weary life while undergoing this, the most cruel of tortures—the knout.

The knout is a strip of hide, a thing which is steeped in some preparation, and strongly glazed, as it were, with metal filings. By this process it becomes both heavy and excessively hard; but before it hardens care is taken to double down the edges, which are left thin, and in this way a groove runs the length of the thong.

The upper part winds around the hand of the executioner; to the other end a small iron hook is fastened. Falling upon the bare back of the sufferer, the knout comes down on its concave side, of which the edges cut like a knife. The thing thus lies in the flesh.

The executioner does not lift it up, but draws it toward him horizontally, so that the hook tears off long strips. If the executioner has not been bribed, the victim loses consciousness after the third stroke, and sometimes dies under the fifth.

The scaffold is an inclined plane, to which the man is tied with his back uncovered. The head and feet are firmly fastened, and the hands, which are knotted together, go round below the plank, any movement of the body becoming impossible.

After receiving the prescribed number of strokes, the poor wretch is untied, and, on his knees, undergoes the cruel punishment of being marked. The letters "Vor"—meaning thief or malefactor—are printed in sharp, pointed letters on a stamp, which the executioner drives into the forehead, and into both cheeks, and, while the blood runs, a black mixture, of which gunpowder is an ingredient, is rubbed into the wounds; they heal, but the bluish scar remains for life.

QUICK THINKING.

An adventure is related by a sportsman which shows that a hunter's life may depend upon his attention to small details. With one of his friends, he was out shooting, when a solitary bull buffalo appeared on the opposite side of a small stream. The bull was evidently in a state of great excitement, for, as the hunters drew near, he faced them, tore up the turf with his horns, and looked down the perpendicular bank, twelve feet high, as though meditating descent.

The sportsman's friend, who carried a little rifle—a single barrel, which shot a small, spherical ball—had, by the other's advice, doubled his charge of powder.

"Aim at the back of the neck if the buffalo lowers his head," said the sportsman to his companion, throwing a hard clod of earth so that it fell into the water at the foot of the bank. The splash caused the animal to look down, exposing his neck. The friend fired. The bull convulsively turned round and fell upon his side. The two men waded across the stream at a shallow place, and ran to where the prostrate animal was lying, apparently dead. The marksman, standing in front of the bull's head, reveled in the delight of his first buffalo.

"Never stand at the head of a buffalo, whether dead or alive," exclaimed the other, whose experience had taught him to be cautious. "Stand upon the side, facing the back of the animal, well away from its legs, as I am standing now."

Scarcely had he uttered the words, when the bull sprang to his feet, and blundered forward straight at his astonished friend, not three feet distant. He jumped forward to avoid the horns, but tripped and fell upon his back, right in the path of the savage bull.

As quick as lightning, the sportsman drew his long hunting knife, and plunged it behind the buffalo's shoulder. The animal fell at the blow. He had received his death stroke.

MISUNDERSTOOD

While a certain lady was feeding a hungry tramp the other day, she discovered that he was pocketing her silverware.

Seizing a poker, she exclaimed:

"Drop those spoons, you scoundrel, and leave the house; leave it instantly!"

"But, madame——"

"Leave the house, I say! Leave the house!" screamed the infuriated woman.

"I go, madame," said the tramp, "never to return; but before I do, I would like to say that I did not intend to take your house."

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Sale of Letters is Stopped.

The sale of more than eight hundred autograph letters, valued at twelve thousand dollars, advertised to take place at a Philadelphia auction room, was stopped by order of a common pleas court, following injunction proceedings by the State of New Hampshire on the ground that the letters are part of its official archives.

The collection is said to be of great historic importance, and contain letters written by George Washington and other revolutionary statesmen and soldiers. The injunction petition declares that all the letters were originally in the custody of the first governor of New Hampshire. The papers disappeared many years ago, and their whereabouts was not disclosed until May, 1913.

Ban on Alcohol in United States Soon, is His Prediction.

"The greatest good thing that has happened in the world since the resurrection of Christ was the prohibition proclamation of Czar Nicholas, of Russia. One hundred and sixty million people went on the water wagon overnight, and to-day they are all glad of it."

This statement was only one of many pointed declarations made by Clinton N. Howard, of Rochester, N. Y., at one of the closing meetings of the big Christian Endeavor Convention in Chicago. He addressed delegates from every part of the country. The convention brought more than ten thousand to the Chicago Coliseum.

"We have been applying a small plaster in an effort to cure a big sore," said Howard, who is known as the "Little Giant." Tiny of body, he flung down the gauntlet in vigorous terms and predicted a dry United States before long. "We have temporized with John Barleycorn," he said, "when he has been convicted a million times.

"For many months there has been a terrible war on the other side of the ocean. I venture to predict it will be won by those forces which have forsworn the use of alcoholic liquor.

"Three years before the war began the kaiser, addressing a large body of young men just being graduated into active naval service, said:

"'I ask that you hereafter dispense wholly with strong drink. I want my men to be able to steer my ships straight, and to shoot straight, and that cannot be done unless a man is sober.'

"To-day there is sitting in the presidential chair of the United States the most princely man who has ever graced that position. He is a good man, a great man, and I would to God he had the same power right now that is vested in Czar Nicholas.

"Alcohol is intrenched on a line which it has held for many years, but the allied forces of decency, honesty, humanity, economy are slowly but surely driving it back."

Oldest College Man Dies.

Reverend Doctor John Fryer Messick, who has the distinction of being the oldest living college graduate in the United States, died in York, Pa., just two days after his one-hundred-and-second birthday anniversary.

Doctor Messick was born in Albany, N. Y., June 28, 1813, and graduated as valedictorian of the class of 1834 at Rutgers College, New Brunswick, N. J. He graduated from Rutgers Seminary three years later.

In 1836, Doctor Messick cast his first vote for Henry Clay, Whig candidate for President of the United States. He reached his one-hundredth birthday without any physical defect whatever.

Ball Players Dialect Different from Fans.

Baseball fans used to talk about the same language as the players. But it's different now. Whether they did it just to be different or just to amuse themselves, the present generation of ball players, including many young gents from our most famous institutions of pure English, have invented a new line of lingo, by which they converse among themselves. Here's the key to a few of the terms now used by all our best players:

Deceiver—A Pitcher.
Monkey Suits—Baseball uniforms.
Uniform—Civilian clothes.
Dogs—Feet.
Sneaks—Soft-soled shoes.
Wolves—Knocking fans.
Orchard—Ball park.
Glue—Money.
Him or He—The manager of the club.
Agate—Regulation baseball.
Sullivans—Upper berths. Also tourist sleepers which have cane seats.
Ducat—A pass to the game.
Stuff—The curves a pitcher puts on the ball.
Bludgeon—A bat.
Work—The act of playing ball.
Geyser—A spitball pitcher.
Groceries—Meals. Also used to denote prizes offered by merchants for early-season feats.

At Seventy-two a "Schoolboy."

One never gets too old to attend school is a principle strongly advocated by Joseph Gillet, oldest "schoolboy" in the engineering courses of the continuation school in Milwaukee, Wis. Mr. Gillet has just turned seventy-two, but he has the appearance and memory of a man of fifty. Although he was denied opportunities of learning to a great extent when he was a boy, he has tried to grasp every opportunity in adult life. This is the eighth time he has matriculated at a school which would offer him advancement.

He was born in Alsace, where he was graduated from the public school at fourteen. Later he attended a private continuation school for six months, after which he decided to learn the machinist trade. From 1860 to 1864 he was an apprentice. Three years later he entered a marine-engineering school, where he remained six months. Finally, before leaving France, he tried sea diving.

When Mr. Gillet landed in Montreal in 1872, he at once entered an English school. His progress in the language was so rapid that in a little while he became a teacher in a night school, at the same time studying steam engineering and drafting. In 1906 he began an electrical

course at Marquette College and continued it for six years.

"I have always been accustomed to much work," declared Mr. Gillet, "and have made it a point to take advantage of it. One can always learn something new in the mechanical trade. I cannot be idle."

Ground Hogs Invade Indiana Farms.

Farmers in the western part of Delaware County, Ind., are up in arms against the ground hog. Hundreds of the pests overrun the farms in that part of the country.

Many farms are literally honeycombed with ground-hog holes. It is said that on one farm not far from Daleville there are as many as five hundred ground-hog dens. The sport of shooting the animals has replaced all others, and hunters who fare afield after these weather prophets seldom go unrewarded.

Apparently the situation has proved to be of keen interest to the squirrels, which are seldom hunted now in that vicinity, the hunters preferring the larger and juicier game, and at the same time conferring a benefit on the farmers by reducing the number of pests which destroy so much corn. According to riflemen and others the squirrels, which are numerous in that part of the country have become positively tame because they have not been hunted. But the ground hogs have become wary and keep sentinels posted, which, by their whistling, warn their comrades of the hunter's approach.

The ground hog's call is a clear, distinct whistle, not greatly unlike the singing of a canary bird, only much louder and even sweeter in tone. It is interesting to observe a full-grown ground hog, weighing several pounds, emitting a melodious warble that might well belong to a feathered songster.

Doctor Camdon C. McKinney of Daleville, is perhaps, eastern Indiana's greatest "ground-hog expert," and what he does not know about these little animals and their ways of living is not worth knowing. Incidentally Doctor McKinney is a crack rifle shot and not only does fried or roasted ground hog grace his family table as often as he may desire, but he supplies a few friends in Muncie and elsewhere with this delicacy on occasion.

"I like to observe the ground hog in his native habitat almost as well as I like to eat his succulent flesh," said Doctor McKinney. "The farmer's chief objection to him and the reason that he welcomes hunters who will destroy the ground hog is because the animals insist on destroying corn. As soon as the corn fills out and reaches the roasting-ear stage the ground hogs get busy and devour the ears, either on the spot where they find them or they drag the corn to their dens and eat it there at their leisure, the whole family of the particular den joining in the feast much as the human family does at the same season of year.

"Family by family these little animals will fill their dens to overflowing with the products of the farmer's toil, and one family will even assist a neighbor who is a little short of help in the ground-hog harvest time. Thus it may be seen that a large colony of ground hogs may cause a great loss in a corn community.

"Human beings might well learn from the ground hog the Biblical lesson: 'It is good for brethren to dwell together in amity.' Ground hogs do not fight among themselves, but they stand up for each other through thick and thin. A personal incident will illustrate this. The other day while hunting I noticed one of the little animals stick his head cautiously out of his hole. When he finally ventured entirely out, I shot him, but I never saw him afterward. No sooner did he fall than his family rushed out and dragged him back into the den.

"The only way a hunter can get close enough to one of these animals to make a good shot is to hide himself not far from a hole and wait for the ground hog to appear. He first will peer out cautiously, only the end of his snout and his twinkling eyes being visible. Then withdrawing, possibly to report to the others of the family that the coast is clear, he displays a little more of his body at the mouth of the den, and then again runs back. He does this several times, running back each time, and on each reappearance displaying a little more of his body.

"Finally satisfied that there is no enemy in sight, he comes entirely into view, and, standing upright on his hind legs, cocks his head to one side, like a rooster that has been out in the rain. It is then that the hunter's opportunity has arrived.

"The ground hog is largely a vegetarian although he does eat bugs, but prefers grains, roots, and grasses. Unlike the opossum, he will not touch carrion nor any unwholesome food."

For Good Health Drink Deeply of Adam's Ale.

"A gallon a day will keep the doctor away."

This is what many physicians say—in one way or another—when asked if it is a good thing to drink much water.

Doctors disagree, however, about whether it is a good thing to drink water with meals, the majority believing that food should not be washed down with liquids, but should be thoroughly chewed and mixed with saliva, which is an aid to digestion. But several doctors who were asked about it asserted that it was good to drink even as much as a quart of water with meals.

All of the seven doctors who were interviewed about the benefits of water drinking agreed that the copious drinking of water was a preventive of disease, and they had known many cases in which health was restored by the drinking of water in large quantities. One doctor advocates the drinking of as much as three gallons of water a day in very warm weather, reducing the amount when the weather is cooler, but never drinking less than a gallon a day.

"Why," said this physician, "two-thirds of the weight of the body is water. In a very warm day in August an average man who is at work will perspire from two to six quarts of water a day. Where is it all coming from if you don't drink it? Many poisons generated by the body are exuded through the pores of the skin in perspiration. Many persons think they are not perspiring unless they can see beads of water on the skin. But we perspire at all times, walking and sleeping, and we do not see it because it evaporates immediately. It is almost impossible to drink too much water."

Another doctor said: "I saw a short article in a newspaper the other evening quoting an eminent medical authority as saying that all girls and women who wished to have a good complexion should drink two quarts of water a day. I would double that and advise them to drink four quarts a day. Give the body plenty of pure water, inside and outside, a gallon a day inside, a thorough

bathing of the whole body at least once a day, and plenty of exercise, preferably by outdoor walking, and you can't very well be sick. If any one would do that, one-half the doctors would have to seek some other business. If every woman would do that, the rouge and complexion powder factories would shut down. There is nothing so good as plenty of water drunk every day for the complexion."

One physician said: "I am not claiming that the drinking of plenty of water is a preventive of all diseases; that would be misleading and silly, but I will say this: I have cured several bad cases of rheumatism, and many cases of stomach ailments with water alone. In those cases the patients were in the habit of drinking very little water. I prescribed a quart of water before breakfast each morning and a gallon on going to bed at night. It worked a cure in each case.

"I say this, most emphatically, that a half gallon or a gallon of water a day will help wash out the toxic poisons that are formed in the body, and will tend to keep a person in good health and help him resist disease.

"There is constantly being accumulated in the body not only waste matter, resulting from chemical changes taking place in the upkeep of vital energy, but also the blood takes up toxic poisons from the intestines. Unless those things are thrown off by the lungs, skin, kidneys, et cetera, we become lazy, dyspeptic, and uric acid will accumulate and cause rheumatism, kidney disorders, and other organic disturbances. Now, such conditions would be much less likely to ensue were the simple precaution taken of drinking a pint of water often throughout the day.

"Especially is this true of persons who take little exercise and who live indoors, where they breathe impure air.

"I often prescribe the slow sipping of at least a pint of hot water in the morning while dressing. This washes out the stomach, stimulates the circulation in the lungs and skin and promotes the action of the liver. If a person has a tendency to gout or rheumatism, the water-drinking habit is especially recommended."

One physician was found who recommended the drinking of a quart of water with each meal, but the majority were opposed to drinking water while eating.

Soldiers in War, 21,770,000.

A German military authority estimates that 21,770,000 men stand opposed to each other—12,820,000 on the side of the Allies and 8,950,000 for Germany, Austria, and Turkey. On the naval side the estimates are as follows:

	Allies.	Germany, et al.
Line ships	113	56
Big cruisers	87	17
Small cruisers	128	56
Torpedo boats	704	358
Submarine	179	*40
Miscellaneous	231	239

* Number of new boats unknown.

The daily cost of the war to the ten nations now taking part he places at 169,000,000 marks—$42,250,000—and he estimates that up to the first of April the total cost of the war was 40,000,000,000 marks—$10,000,000,000. Italy again excepted, he placed the annual cost of such a war at $15,000,000,000.

It would take 60,000,000 of the huge 1,000-mark bank notes to pay this cost, and these notes, stacked on top of each other, would make a pile 20,000 feet, almost four miles in height. In gold, this same sum would weigh 24,000,000 kilograms—52,912,800 pounds, whereas the entire gold production of the entire world during the last five hundred years has amounted to but 15,000,000 kilograms.

The daily war costs for the German empire he places at 33,000,000 marks—$8,250,000, and only forty days of this conflict cost as much as the whole Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. The cost to England, exclusive of the colonies, is about the same, and three months of this war cost Great Britain as much as the Boer War, lasting two years and seven months. France spends a little more daily.

Selling Street Cars Popular Bunko Game.

Government buildings, skyscrapers, and "gold bricks" have been "sold" to innocent farmers, who, with carpet bag in hand, stand on crowded corners and view the "wonders" of great cities.

The days of this kind of crooked work are passed, so police say, but nevertheless street cars have been "sold" in Chicago and elsewhere in Illinois, within the last two weeks.

Adorjan Antal is under arrest in Cleveland, Ohio, on a charge that he "sold" street cars to foreigners who recently settled in Kane County, Illinois.

Report from Columbus says the Ohio governor's office has honored a requisition from the governor of Illinois for the return of Antal, alias Ontal Impre.

Wins in Long Name Contest.

Following the marriage of Anna Staingenskaitiskitage and the receipt of congratulations from Mae Makoupakosalouskis and William J. Pappademanakakoopoulous, the Duquoin, Ill., post-office clerks inaugurated a contest for long names. Demetries Pappatheothoroukoummountorgeotopoulous, of Moline, Ill., was declared the winner.

At Twenty, She Sees for First Time.

After living in darkness twenty-five years, a two-minute operation by Doctor Vard H. Hulen, of San Francisco, enabled Miss Tomsina Carlyle, a University of California student, to gaze for the first time upon her mother's face.

Miss Carlyle describes her sensations since regaining sight as being difficult to define or classify.

"Being blind since birth," Miss Carlyle said, "has taught me it is the brain, not the sense of sight, that counts. The speed of moving objects, particularly on the streets, staggered me for a time, and if I become frightened at a street corner, I close my eyes and walk forward rejoicingly in safety."

Cost of Hanging Man Was Seventeen Dollars.

The first record of warrants ever used by a treasurer of Rush County, Ind., covering the period from 1822 to 1841, was found in the treasurer's office recently. The record showed that it cost the county only seventeen dollars to hang Edward L. Swanson, the only man who ever paid the death penalty in Rush County.

He was convicted of the murder of Elisha Clark in April, 1829, and, after a motion for a new trial failed, was hanged in May of the same year. The warrants

issued show that five dollars was allowed Beverly R. Ward for making a coffin for Swanson, two dollars was allowed David Looney for digging the grave, and ten dollars was paid William L. Bupelt for "rope, cap, shroud, and gallows for the execution of Edward L. Swanson."

Twins, Eighty-six, Rocked in Cradle.

Mrs. J. C. Barrett, of Edmonston, N. Y., and Mrs. Nathan V. Brand, of Leonardsville, N. Y., who claim the distinction of being the oldest twins in the State, celebrated their eighty-sixth birthday with some unusual features. The cradle in which they slept as children has been preserved, and the invited guests insisted that the twins be rocked in it in the presence of all, and this was done, adding more merriment to the occasion.

Facts You May Not Know.

There are eighty thousand exhibitors at the Panama-Pacific Exposition, and the weight of the exhibits averages one ton each.

The opal is the only gem not successfully counterfeited.

One dollar to get married, ten cents to go to college, and fifty cents to graduate are some of the items in the new regulation "governing the affixing of stamps on certificates concerning human affairs," which were recently promulgated in China.

The population of French Indo-China is about 20,000,000, of whom 20,000 are Europeans, chiefly French.

The human family is subject to about 1,200 different kinds of disease and ailment.

Motion pictures of insects in flight show that they regulate their speed by changing the inclination of their wings rather than by altering the rapidity of their motion.

All telephone operators in Egypt are required to be able to speak English, French, Italian, Greek, and Arabic.

The American mountain sheep are the greatest leapers in the world.

Women study art with the aid of mirrors.

Bright people look upon the bright side of life.

The more you have, the more your fun will cost you.

Auction sales originated in ancient Rome, and were introduced to enable soldiers to dispose of spoils of war.

Military training is compulsory on all male citizens between the ages of twelve and twenty-five in New Zealand.

Jailbirds Sing as They Saw Through Bars.

John Wolfe, undersheriff of Wyandotte County, Kan., was seated in front of the Wyandotte County Jail the other night when he heard the oft-repeated strains of "Throw Out the Life Line." The prisoners were singing. Wolfe crept to a side window and listened.

"Throw out the life line across the dark wave," floated out to him, and between the words came a sharp sound, as of steel scraping against steel.

Then there was a pause in the singing. The singers had come to the end of the song.

"How are you getting on, Brody?" was the next sound.

"All right, sing up, sing 'Rock of Ages.'"

"Rock of ages, cleft for me," the chorus began.

But before that hymn was finished, two deputies and Wolfe stepped into the cell occupied by Jess Brody. He is under fifteen years' sentence for the murder of Nathan Gill. With him were Frank Dusenberry, awaiting his second trial, charged with the murder of Jennie James, and Herbert Davidson, held on a statutory charge. In the cell were found ten steel saws and two knives. A bar had been sawed through. Once out of the cell, only a window and its soft iron bars remained between the men and the jail yard.

In the next cell was Fred Wing, charged with the murder of Mr. and Mrs. John M. Crist, his father and mother-in-law, and attempted murder of his wife. A knife was found in his cell.

There were thirty-nine prisoners in the jail, two others charged with murder.

Big Fish Causes Drowning.

While attempting to land a big fish, Frank Waterbury, of Reading, Mich., was drowned in Turner Lake. He was in the same boat with his brother, and when he hooked the big one, both men stood in one end of the boat and tried to land the fish. The boat filled with water and sank. The brother swam ashore.

Stolen Bird Returns Home.

A neighbor of Paul Graham, of No. 3 Bradburn Street, Rochester, N. Y., saw a canary bird flitting about in a tree within a few doors from the Graham home. Members of the family were notified and the bird was at once identified. The bird's cage was brought out and placed on a lawn near the house. The bird promptly flew to the ground and entered its cage.

Burglars entered the Graham house a few days ago, and, in addition to taking several articles, took the canary. The police were notified of the finding of the canary. The canary was carried away in a new brass cage. How it escaped, of course, is not known, but it evidently was taken far away.

Find American Girl Husky.

The health department has weighed and measured ten thousand New York school children who, from July 13, 1914, to April 13, 1915, asked for working papers.

The boys of English, Scotch, or Irish stock weighed, on the average, 102.44 pounds. They were the lightest of all in avoirdupois.

The boys of Italian stock weighed 104.61.

The native American boys of American-born parents weighed 105.61 pounds.

The boys of German stock weighed 106.62 pounds.

Those of Jewish stock weighed 106.92 pounds.

The Russian, Polish, or Bohemian boys weighed 108.13 pounds. They were the heaviest of all.

The composite average weight of the boys of all nationalities, native and foreign, was 105.71 pounds.

In the matter of height, the German boys were the tallest, with an average of 62.39 inches.

The native American boys of American-born parents averaged 62.38 inches, the English, Scotch, or Irish, 62.21; the Russian, Polish, or Bohemian, 61.87; the Jewish, 60.93; the Italian, 60.30.

The composite average height of boys of all nationalities, American and foreign, was 61.35 inches.

The girls of native American, English, Scotch, and Irish stocks were taller and heavier than the boys of those stocks.

The composite average height of all the girls was less than that of the boys, but they were a fraction heavier than the boys. The Russian, Polish, and Bohemian girls were the tallest. The German girls were the heaviest.

No Hair Cut in Fifty Years.

Caleb Stone, eighty, Middletown, Ill., received his first hair cut and shave in fifty years. He said a half century ago that he would not permit his hair to be cut or his beard to be trimmed, and kept his word. His white locks had grown down to his shoulders and his beard to his waist.

Groping for Gems in the Sea.

There is plenty of romance and excitement connected with the work of diving for pearls in the waters of West Australia, but one of the strangest things about the business is the curious mental condition of the divers while they are under the water, groping for precious gems, says an exchange. During a part of his time below, the diver is said to be bordering on insanity. A grudge against or a suspicion of those above is suddenly magnified in the diver's imagination, and he signals to be pulled up, resolved on immediate revenge. When he reaches the top, however, the imaginary wrongs vanish.

At a depth of eighty feet the diver cannot see well; he moves painfully and he breathes hard. At every foot deeper he thinks how slight a mishap may befoul his life line, and all his thoughts tend to center on his hazards.

At such times the inadequacy of his pay appears to him as a huge grievance, but when he comes to the surface and rests a few minutes, all is again serene.

Man Suffocates in Balloon.

Asphyxiation inside of a balloon was the perilous plight by Andy Doyle, of Krug Park, Omaha, who assisted Veo L. Huntley, balloonist, at the recent celebration in Shenandoah, Iowa.

Doyle was stationed inside the bag space to watch the progress made in filling and to call out for more gas from time to time, as was the usual custom. Because of the strong winds blowing the fumes of the burning kerosene oil to the ground, he was suffocated.

Hearing no noise from him, others went inside the bag and dragged him out. He was revived in a short while.

From Mule Driver to Superintendent of Car System.

"Play straight and keep at it."

This is the only formula of success followed by William W. Weatherwax, who rose from a "mule driver" at one dollar and a half a day to be a ten-thousand-dollar-a-year street-car superintendent.

Weatherwax told the story of his remarkable rise to Chicago's street railway board of arbitration at a recent session.

He entered the service of the Chicago City Railways Company as a boy of twenty. His work was driving horses hitched to cars. His pay was one dollar and fifty cents a day. He was known as a "mule boy."

From that beginning, by steady, persevering work, Weatherwax worked steadily upward. To-day he is in charge of the operation of the surface lines of Chicago.

Asked to account for his success, Weatherwax said he "guessed it just happened."

"I worked hard and played straight—that was all there was to it," he said. "I left school when I was thirteen years old. I got a job with a street-car company at Troy, N. Y., my home town. I started with the Chicago company in 1886. I have been in its employ ever since."

Weatherwax's progress from the bottom up ran through these stages. Driver, horse tender, hay-hoist operator in car barn, cable-car conductor, assistant barn foreman, division superintendent, general superintendent of transportation.

To-day he is the operating head of the greatest street-railway system in the world, with two assistants, thirteen division superintendents, and thousands of men under his control.

What Women are Doing.

"Woman's work never ends," wrote a poet long ago, and his statement is as true to-day as ever. In addition to the women who work in their homes, performing manifold household duties and rearing their children, there are many who engage in the "gainful occupations," as the census reports call them. There is hardly an occupation listed in the latest United States census in which woman is not represented. There are, for instance, seventy-seven woman lumbermen—raftsmen and wood-choppers—in the United States. There are 2,550 woman stock herders and raisers, forty-five quarry operators, thirty-one blacksmiths, fifteen brick and stone masons, and forty-four longshoremen. Many women have traveled far up the road to success in their work. Ten women head iron foundries. There are 325 woman bankers and 1,347 bank cashiers. Nearly a thousand women are wholesale dealers. One woman is listed as a railroad official. Three are proprietors of grain elevators.

Our Talc and Soapstone.

The United States produces more talc and soapstone than all the rest of the world combined. Moreover, according to the United States Geological Survey, our production has nearly doubled in the last ten years, increasing from 91,185 short tons, valued at $940,731 in 1904, to 172,296 short tons, valued at $1,865,087, in 1914.

Of talc alone the United States produced 151,088 tons, and of soapstone 21,208 tons. Talc is a mineral of which soapstone is an impure massive form. Few people are aware how much we owe to talc and soapstone. It is one of the softest of minerals. It is so smooth and slippery that it has become a great panacea for friction in many branches of human industry. Talc is used in making talcum toilet powder, the tailor uses it to chalk fabrics for new suits, and talc "slate pencils" and crayons have enabled many scholars to solve knotty problems. Talc bleaches out cotton cloth, and in paints we see it everywhere, but its chief use is as a filler in paper of many kinds.

There are nine States producing this useful mineral. New York continues to be the leading producer, yielding more than fifty-seven per cent of the total production of talc in the United States, and far outranking all other States excepting Vermont, which has in recent years so greatly increased its production that in 1914 its output was about three-fourths that of New York.

Of soapstone, Virginia holds the greatest supply, and, backed up by Vermont, it meets the great demand for washtubs, sinks, and fireless cookers.

Florida Camphor Industry.

The camphor industry in Florida, which may be said to have begun in 1905, has developed so greatly within a single decade it is confidently expected that within a few years it will be able to supply the demand for this important gum in this country. The bulk of the camphor now used here is imported from Japan. A single tract of 1,600 acres of camphor trees planted in 1908, last year yielded over ten thousand pounds of camphor gum, in addition to the proportionate supply of oil.

This tract of land was planted by a celluloid factory, which is utilizing the gum for its own purposes. Another company last year bought eighteen square miles of land in the same locality, and is rapidly planting it in camphor, 1,600 acres having been planted this year.

Enough seedlings are already on hand to plant nine square miles. Several methods, and also some new machinery, have been devised for camphor production in Florida, which will offset the cheap labor of Japan and insure a sufficient profit.

A Clever Invention.

To combat the cotton-boll weevil, a Mississippian has invented a device which, suspended from a man's shoulders, brushes the insects from cotton plants into a receptacle holding oil.

Owes His Life to Rise in Price of Zinc Ore.

To one-hundred-and-thirty-dollar zinc ore, J. H. Worth, mine and other property owner of Joplin, Mo., owes his life. Two men, Royal Cardwell and Samuel Houston, prospectors, had been waiting for nearly a year for the price of ore to rise. They knew of an old, abandoned drift in a certain mine, where, if ore prices would go high enough, they might make some "easy money" by scrapping material that had been left years before. Their wish was realized last week, when zinc concentrates went to one hundred and thirty dollars per ton.

Entering the old drift in question, they found an unconscious man tied hand and foot and gagged. He was taken to a hospital, and a few minutes later, when he had recovered his senses, he told a strange story.

Worth had been accosted in a Joplin hotel by a stranger who said he wanted to look over some of the former's mining properties with a view to obtaining a lease. The stranger's partner then came up and was introduced, but Worth does not remember either of their names. The three entered a taxi and were taken to the old mine first mentioned, and, after sending the motor back, proceeded to investigate the underground workings. When they had at last entered the old, abandoned drift, Worth was seized by the two men, gagged and tied to a mining timber, where he was left for about an hour.

When the two men returned, they carried a box which had one end of a long fuse attached to something inside. They placed the box at the bound man's side and stretched the fuse out on the floor of the drift, lighted the far end, and, as they started away, one of them remarked:

"The fire will reach the dynamite in an hour, and that will be your finish."

That the dynamite, of which there was about fifty pounds, quite enough to have caved in the drift, did not explode was from the fact, afterward discovered, that the men, in walking about, about stepped on the fuse, cutting it in two against a sharp point of stone, thus stopping the little spark of destruction.

Worth had no idea as to the cause of the attack made upon him.

New Champion Horseshoer.

Harry Wilson, a Des Moines, Iowa, horseshoer, defeated Frank McCarty, of Minneapolis, and Tom Welsh, of Milwaukee, in a shoeing contest. The winner's time was five minutes, forty-four seconds.

This Lad Makes a Home Run.

A twelve-inch trout, five-foot rattlesnake, and a big black bear can afford a whole lot of excitement for one day. According to Robert Bastian, a sixteen-year-old boy, entirely too much for a tenderfoot.

Robert was fishing in Roaring Run Creek, near Williamsport, Pa. He had just hauled out the trout, when he discovered the rattlesnake curled up beside the big stone. Seizing a club, he started to kill the snake, when he heard something crashing through the bushes. He jumped aside just in time to avoid the rush of the bear.

Without waiting to pick up trout, fishing rod, or lines, he made a home run of over a mile. Folks in one of the houses he passed on his return dash say they couldn't make out whether he was some low-flying bird or a frightened jack rabbit.

Trees Lightning Is Most Apt to Strike.

What trees are most likely to be struck by lightning? A Swedish forestry journal called the *Woods* has made a serious study of this subject, and the results are both instructive and interesting. The oak, for example, is about a hundred times more likely to be struck than the beech. Next to the oak, the trees that are most often struck are the poplars, pear trees, elms, willows, ash, and the larger kinds of evergreens.

Those least likely to be struck by lightning are alders, maples, horse chestnut, and beeches. The last-named seems to be the one that is least often injured by lightning. A middle position is occupied by lindens, apple trees, cherry trees, walnut trees, and real chestnuts. The birch is classified by some as being quite safe from lightning, while others have a directly opposite view.

A German botanist, Ernest Stahl, has explained that liability to be struck by lightning depends on the ease with which the trunks of different trees get wet. It is a well-known observation that "dry thunder" is the most dangerous, and it is probable that the wet layer about the bark of a tree acts as a safeguard. Therefore, it is clear that in a thunderstorm it is best to avoid trees with a dry bark, and also trees that have been mutilated in the crown.

It may also be observed in this connection that the number of people killed every year for every million inhabitants amounts to 1.8 in Sweden, 1 in England, 4 in France, and 4.4 in Germany.

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